

\$5

A-League Round 27 Friday 5th April - Sunday 7th April 2013

Still
Going
Strong
Since
2005



Now Available
at the
A-League

Follow us on:

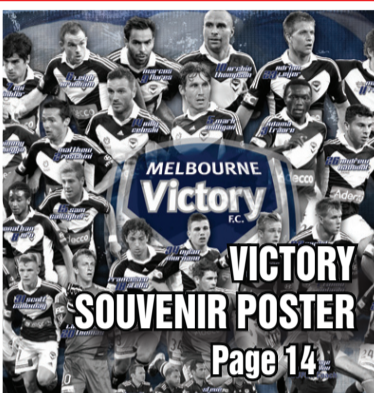
facebook
twitter

goal!

weekly



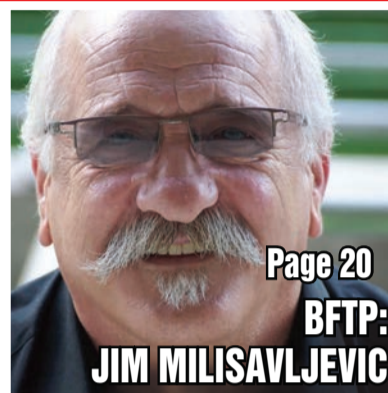
E: news@goalweekly.com T: (03) 9551 7538 www.goalweekly.com M: PO Box 142 Port Melbourne VIC 3207



**VICTORY
SOUVENIR POSTER**
Page 14



**HAL ROUND 27
REWIND**
Page 5



Page 20
**BFTP:
JIM MILISAVLJEVIC**



V-LEAGUE WRAP
Page 21



NPL REVIEWS
Page 17



Melb Victory



Wanderers



Adelaide Utd



Glory



Mariners



Roar

IT'S HIGH OCTANE FOOTBALL TIME
FINALS FEVER!



WANT TO PLAY SOCCER IN THE USA?
NSR Soccer Australia scout, evaluate & promote
Australian players to 2500+ USA Colleges.

NSR
soccer australia

Register for a trial in your region, to find out more visit www.nsrsockeraustralia.com

Can Glory press correct button for success?



MACCA AT LARGE

With Craig MacKenzie

HERE'S the thing. Does Perth Glory press Melbourne Victory tonight inside Victory's defensive third or concentrate on pressing Victory in the midfield part of the contest?

I've pondered that question for the past few days thinking that pressing only in the midfield area gives Victory the out of playing the ball back to defenders and starting the merry-go-round again.

Who best to answer that question? Certainly not a man who was and never will be good enough to be a coach. And that's where it's best left to the experts. Enter Perth Glory supremo Alistair Edwards.

"Just look at the last time we played Victory. We try and nullify the other team as much as possible but without losing sight of our own style of play.

"We make sure that when a team like Melbourne Victory get the ball that we know what they are trying to do. We'll go out there and try to impose ourselves on the game but make it as difficult as possible to let them get into their rhythm.

It's only a fortnight back that Glory beat Victory 3-2 at AAMI Park and I asked Edwards, apart from the apparent difference of a cut-throat final clash, what was different from the Victory his men defeated then and the one they will face tonight.

Manchester United and Celtic and done things that most players can only dream about and on a personal perspective he knows that I have the utmost respect for what he's done in his career."

Miller also knew that change was afoot and although it seems almost heretical to suggest but Miller now is on a learning curve in terms of the way he plays.

"Liam knows that our playing style has changed to something he's not been used to and he's learning a different way of playing but the best thing is that he's approached it with an open mind and he's just got better and better," said Edwards.

"Our job as coaches is to make sure that our players go out onto the park and aren't second guessing what they should do. We call it team tasks and in our club now every player knows that they have to do certain things for the team and if they do then their individual performances will follow.

"These team tasks are not negotiable."

It's only a fortnight back that Glory beat Victory 3-2 at AAMI Park and I asked Edwards, apart from the apparent difference of a cut-throat final



In their hands: Perth Glory's Alistair Edwards hopes to come up trumps against the Victory.
Photo: CRAIG ECCLES

clash, what was different from the Victory his men defeated then and the one they will face tonight. He laughed briefly.

"Well let's try Rojas, Milligan and Archie. All three of these guys are class players and in terms of the way Victory plays they are very good, attack-minded and focussed players who play the game the way it should be played."

It may surprise readers to discover that Glory won't have a single training session at Etihad before tonight's

final. The Perth club arrived in Melbourne yesterday and Edwards couldn't care less about not training at the matchday venue.

"Look, we started on the bottom and now we're here at the biggest event on the football calendar.

"It's like being invited to a party and we kind of RSVPed very late. No-one expected us to turn up but here we are going to be hosted by a very good team so we're going to rock up and enjoy being part of the party.

"The one thing that's going to hap-

pen is that the fans who turn up, and I hope there's 40,000 of them, are going to be in for a real treat.

"On the one hand you've got Melbourne Victory who are a very good footballing team and you'll see another good footballing team in Perth Glory.

"Both teams have some excellent individual players and it could come down to which of these individual players are going to be the game breaker."

Okon faces fitness fight

PAUL Okon's most pressing problem is how to overcome lack of match fitness for the home-based Young Socceroos who take on the world in Turkey in June.

"To be honest it's my biggest headache. For some of the players their seasons already have finished because their teams didn't make the A-League finals. It's a problem that none of the other countries in Turkey face," said Okon.

"We've looked at so many ways of restructuring, scheduling, programming - it's probably the hardest thing we have to combat."

The Young Socceroos head coach dismisses the state premier leagues as an option to keep his troops match fit believing that placing them in a semi-professional environment would be counter-productive.

"We'll have two camps for the home-based players at the end of April, beginning of May, where we will try to maintain fitness and play a couple of games against local teams.

"You'd much prefer the players to be training every day in their own club environment and playing real matches on the weekend but that's

not to be."

May is the month when our World Cup Under-20 challenge switches into overdrive starting with a training camp in Holland followed by another camp in Cyprus on our way to a nine-day camp in Antalya on Turkey's Mediterranean coast.

We've been drawn in Group C alongside the host nation, South American champion Colombia and El Salvador.

Our first game is on 22 June against Colombia in Trabzon's 23,772-capacity Huseyin Avni Aker Stadium, the same venue where we finish our group campaign against Turkey on 28 June.

Sandwiched in between these two challenging ties is a 25 June meeting with El Salvador in Rize's 15,484-capacity Yeni Sejir Stadium.

Trabzon and Rize are situated in northeastern Turkey's Black Sea coast and the Young Socceroos will fly into their Trabzon base four days before their opening game.

The average June temperature for Trabzon is 23.5 degrees Celsius while the June average for Rize is 26 but it won't surprise if the mercury rises into the 30s.

"Both match venues are excellent and we'll stay in Trabzon throughout the group stages as Rize is only a 40-minute bus trip away," said Okon.

The coach will have a tough time at

the selection table. He can only pick a 21-man squad (18 outfield players and three goalkeepers) which is two less than the squad that successfully qualified from last November's AFC Under-19 finals.

"It makes it very tough because it means that automatically I have to cut two players from the World Cup qualifying squad."

Okon's problems are compounded by a few youngsters who have come onto the radar in the past few months and are pressing hard for inclusion.

"At that age things can change very quickly because some young players develop quicker than others, some stagnate, some are more consistent than others - all of these factors have to be taken into consideration when we are selecting the squad."

Okon keeps a log of every minute of game time of every eligible home-based and overseas Aussie professional footballer.

"I have to know who is playing and who isn't and if they are injured they have to report to us so that we can monitor their recovery. It's the only way we can manage the situation.

"One thing I'm really proud of since I've been with the Young Socceroos is that we've really only had one soft tissue injury.

"At the end of the day we want players to return to their clubs without



Paul Okon

injuries and we look after our players as best we can.

"We take all of this into consideration when we have our training camps and we plan the amount of work we put our players through. They are maturing as young men and the last thing we want is to have them injured through being overworked."

Another important item to take into consideration is the quality of the opposition and Okon is determined to leave no stone unturned in amassing extensive dossiers on his Group C rivals in Turkey.

"Fortunately when I was in Istanbul for the World Cup draw I got to watch Turkey play twice against Portugal and I also have some footage of them.

"I have footage of Colombia and I have followed the South American



FIFA U-20 World Cup 2013 group stage draw:
GROUP A (Istanbul, Kayseri): France, CAF, USA, Spain.
GROUP B (Kayseri, Istanbul): Cuba, Korea Republic, CAF, Portugal
GROUP C (Trabzon, Rize, Gaziantep): Turkey, El Salvador, Colombia, Australia
GROUP D (Gaziantep, Trabzon): Mexico, Greece, Paraguay, CAF
GROUP E (Antalya, Bursa): Chile, CAF Champions, England, Iraq
GROUP F (Bursa, Antalya): OFC Champions, Uzbekistan, Uruguay, Croatia
Qantas Young Socceroos Matches v Colombia on 22 June v El Salvador on 25 June v Turkey on 28 June
<i>All Qantas Young Socceroos matches at the FIFA U-20 World Cup Turkey 2013 will be broadcast live & exclusive on SBS TV.</i>

THIS IS FOOTBALL

www.thisisfootball.com.au

CLUB KIT SPECIALIST

P: 03 9428 3066

189 Swan Street Richmond Vic 3121. Email: thisisfootball@live.com.au















VICTORIA'S LEADER IN TEAM WEAR

Liverpool FC announce first-ever visit to Oz

Liverpool will visit Australia for the first time to play a friendly against Melbourne Victory at the MCG on July 24.

Regarded as one of the most popular English Premier League clubs, Liverpool will travel to Australia for the first time in their 121-year history as part of their pre-season tour of Asia in preparation for the 2013-14 season.

Liverpool managing director Ian Ayre revealed the club are very aware of their popularity in Australia and claimed the match at the MCG exemplifies their 'commitment' to fans around the world.

"We know we have a large fan base in Australia and New Zealand and this visit shows our commitment to bringing the club closer to our fans all over the globe, no matter how far away from Anfield they may live," Ayre said.

"We are very much looking forward to playing in Melbourne and giving our supporters a chance to see the team up close."

Tuesday's announcement con-



International stars Luis Suarez and Steven Gerrard will head Down Under to face Melbourne Victory in July.

firmed rumours linking Liverpool to an Australian visit that had surfaced in March.

With an A-League All Stars team

set to play Manchester United in Sydney four days earlier, the friendly between Liverpool and Victoria will continue a brilliant week

for football in Australia.

Football Federation Australia CEO David Gallop believes the two matches will cap off what he con-

siders 'the best-ever season' in the A-League's history.

"Liverpool is a famous and hugely popular club but they will find that Melbourne Victory has built an amazing following in just eight seasons," Gallop said.

"The match will showcase all that's good about the Hyundai A-League after the best-ever season for the standard of play, big crowds and record TV ratings."

Melbourne Victory chairman Anthony Di Pietro believes Liverpool's decision to play his club is 'great recognition' for the two-time A-League champions.

"Liverpool is one of the most famous clubs on the planet and the fact that they've opted to play Melbourne Victory on their first ever tour to Australia is great recognition for our club and the progress we've made in our short history," Di Pietro said.

Tickets for Liverpool versus Melbourne Victory will go on sale on April 11.

A-League Finals

Hyundai A-League Elimination Finals

Friday 5 April 2013

Melbourne Victory (3) v Perth Glory (6)

Kick off 7.30pm (local)

Gates open at 6.00pm

Etiad Stadium, Melbourne

To get your tickets visit

www.a-league.com.au/tickets

Sunday 7 April 2013

Adelaide United (4) v Brisbane Roar (5)

Kick off 4.30pm (local) (5.00pm AEST)

Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide

To get your tickets visit

www.a-league.com.au/tickets

Hyundai A-League Semi Finals

Friday 12 April 2013

Western Sydney Wanderers (1) v TBC

(lowest ranked winner of Elimination

Finals)

Kick off 7.30pm (local)

Parramatta Stadium

Ticketing Information

• General Public on sale - Thursday 4 April

9am - Sunday 7 April 5pm

• Away Team Member on sale - Monday 8

April 9am - 11pm

• General Public reopens - Tuesday 9

April 9am

To get your tickets visit

www.a-league.com.au/tickets

Sunday 14 April 2013

Central Coast Mariners (2) v TBC (high-

est ranked winner of Elimination Finals)

Kick off 5.00pm (local)

Bluetongue Stadium, Gosford

Ticketing Information

• General Public on sale - Thursday 4 April

9am - Sunday 7 April 5pm

• Away Team Member on sale - Monday 8

April 9am - 11pm

• General Public reopens - Tuesday 9

April 9am

To get your tickets visit

www.a-league.com.au/tickets

SHORT PASSES

Paston Retires



Wellington Phoenix goalkeeper Mark Paston brought the curtain down on his professional football career against Melbourne Victory at Westpac Stadium last Sunday.

Paston, 36, told team-mates of his decision to retire at training in typical fashion, with his brief speech bringing laughter rather than tears.

With that task out of the way Paston, the consummate professional, went about his work as he has done for the past six seasons at the club, giving nothing less than 100 per cent.

As he relaxed once his last session was over Paston smiled at the thought he won't have to do it again - for the time being at least.

While he will say goodbye to the Phoenix he is leaving the door "slightly ajar" when it comes to continuing his All Whites career. "It would be nice to finish my international career at the 2014 World Cup finals in Brazil but that is some way off," Paston said.

Risdon Commits



Perth Glory have received a huge boost on the eve of the Finals Series with right full-back Josh Risdon signing a contract extension until the end of the 2015/16

Hyundai A-League season.

Risdon, 20 years-old, has played 55 games for Perth Glory and scored one stunning goal, the winner against Melbourne Victory just 11 days ago.

HAL SETS CROWD RECORD



The Hyundai A-League has set a new all-time season attendance record of 1,666,942.

The aggregate crowd figure for the just completed Hyundai A-League 2012/13 regular season eclipsed the previous record, set last season, by more than 250,000.

FFA CEO David Gallop said the 18% jump in attendances was a significant indicator that the Hyundai A-League is moving towards a sustainable future.

"This season more Australians have watched the Hyundai A-League live in our venues than ever before," said Gallop.

"What they've experienced is the best standard of football our competition has ever seen and the best live atmosphere in Australian sport.

"The growth is the end product of hard work and investment by 10 clubs. I thank the fans all over Australia for making this an unforgettable season."

The average crowd of 12,348 is the all-time record since the Hyundai A-League expanded from its inaugural eight-club format.

The jump in crowds was matched by the 18% rise in TV audiences to almost 80,000 per game, an all-time record, with the cumulative TV audience passing 10 million for the first time.

In digital channels, footballaustralia.com.au, powered by the 10 exciting brands of the Hyundai A-League clubs and Australia's national teams, continues to be the number one football destination for Australia's online audience.

On average FFA's audiences total more than 800,000 unique browsers or individual fans visiting websites, m-sites and mobile apps per month. This equates to a 40% increase on the footballaustralia.com.au network compared to last season.

Growth in social media has also seen notable increases including an aggregate increase across Hyundai A-League assets on Facebook and Twitter of a massive 105%.

"The A-League is not just on the move, it's expanding massively in the mainstream of Australian society and capturing thousands of new fans live, on TV and in the digital space," said Gallop.

"Importantly, we are riding a demographic wave. We are a young, exciting and international sport. We represent the diversity of Australian society like no other.

"Now we enter the new-look Hyundai A-League Finals Series that will showcase all that's great about the competition into an action packed three weeks of sudden death football."

Heskey re-signs with the Jets



The Hunter Ports Newcastle Jets are pleased to confirm the re-signing of marquee striker Emile Heskey for the 2013/14 season.

The former England international made 23 appearances for the Jets in 2012/13 and finished the season as the Club's leading goal scorer with a personal haul of nine goals.

Heskey's arrival coincided with the Jets reaching 11,000 Members, the highest in the Club's history.

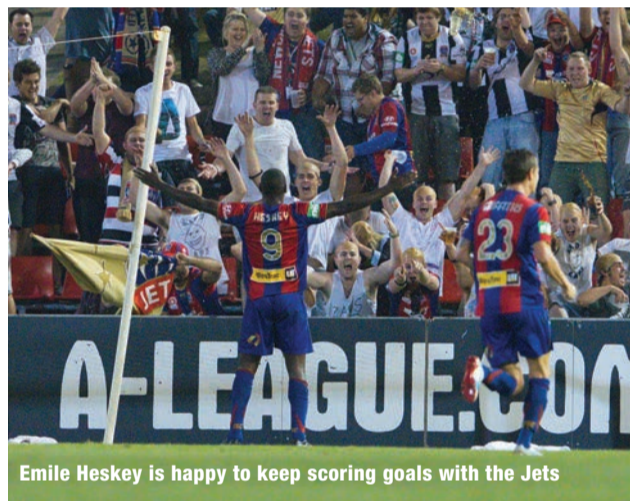
The ex-Liverpool striker capped off a stellar debut season in the A-League by being named as one of the finalists for the Jets' Player of the Year award.

"I'm pleased to be extending my stay in Newcastle for another year," Heskey said.

"Everyone has made me feel very welcome here and I've really enjoyed my first season playing for the Jets.

"I'm looking forward to getting a full pre-season under my belt and helping the team push for a finals place next season."

Jets head coach Gary van Egmond said he was delighted to have secured the services of Heskey for



Emile Heskey is happy to keep scoring goals with the Jets

another year.

"It's great to have Emile here for another season," van Egmond said.

"He brings a wealth of experience to our squad with everything he's achieved in his career.

"His performances in his first season with us were excellent and we're looking forward to seeing more of the same from him next year."

Jets CEO Robbie Middleby said Heskey's decision to re-sign with

the Jets was a coup for the Club.

"The impact Emile has made at the Jets both on and off the field since he arrived in Newcastle cannot be overstated," Middleby said.

"To have him sign on for another season shows he believes in what we're doing at the Jets and it's a massive compliment to the Club.

"It will be great for the development of some of our younger players to be able to learn from a footballer of Emile's stature for another season."



Rod Allen

Vale Rod Allen

The Australian football community is today mourning the loss of Rod Allen, the Western Sydney Wanderers Media Manager and former FFA Head of Media Relations, who died in an accident early last Sunday.

FFA CEO David Gallop paid tribute to Rod for his contribution to football, sport and media in Australia.

"Rod had a remarkable career in sports journalism and more recently sports administration and was regarded as an extremely professional and well-respected journalist, editor

and media manager," said Gallop. "His no-nonsense approach to the task at hand was his trademark and many who dealt with him appreciated this dedication to getting the story, hitting deadline or managing an issue.

"He worked through a significant period during his time at FFA which included the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa and our bids to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2015 AFC Asian Cup.

"Most recently Rod was working with the Western Sydney Wander-

ers as Media Manager and was an important member of the club's staff. "On behalf of the Australian Football Community, we offer our deepest condolences to his family during this extremely sad time," concluded Gallop.

Following a long and distinguished career as a journalist with both at News Limited and Fairfax newspapers, which included the position as the Managing Editor of Sport for The Sydney Morning Herald from 2003-2008, Rod joined FFA as a consultant in late 2009 and in January 2010 was promoted to the position of Head of Media Relations.

Rod was a media officer with the Qantas Socceroos at the 2010 FIFA

World Cup in South Africa and was also a prominent figure during the final ten months of Australia's bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

In 2011 Rod left FFA to pursue his media consultancy business "Rocket Media" which included a role with the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) at the 2012 London Olympic Games as the Manager of the AOC's office in the main press centre.

Late last year, Rod took on the role as the Media Manager for the Western Sydney Wanderers and he was present at Hunter Stadium on Friday night to see them take out the Hyundai A-League 2012/13 Premiers Plate.

Rod is survived by his wife Laila.

THIS IS FOOTBALL

www.thisisfootball.com.au

CLUB KIT SPECIALIST

P: 03 9428 3066

189 Swan Street Richmond Vic 3121. Email: thisisfootball@live.com.au



VICTORIA'S LEADER IN TEAM WEAR

SCOREBOARD

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 West Sydney Wanderers	27	18	3	6	41	21	20	57
2 Central Coast Mariners	27	16	6	5	48	22	26	54
3 Melbourne Victory	27	13	5	9	48	45	3	44
4 Adelaide United	27	12	5	10	38	37	1	41
5 Brisbane Roar	27	10	5	12	33	29	4	35
6 Perth Glory	27	9	5	13	29	31	-2	32
7 Sydney FC	27	9	5	13	41	51	-10	32
8 Newcastle Jets	27	8	7	12	30	45	-15	31
9 Melbourne Heart	27	8	3	16	31	40	-9	27
10 Wellington Phoenix	27	7	6	14	31	49	-18	27

THIS WEEK

Hyundai A-League Elimination Final 1
Friday 5 April 2013
Melbourne Victory (3) v Perth Glory (6)
Etihad Stadium, Melbourne
Kick off 7.30pm (local)
Gates open at 6.00pm

Hyundai A-League Elimination Final 2
Sunday 7 April 2013
Adelaide United (4) v Brisbane Roar (5)
Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide
Kick off 4.30pm (local)
(5.00pm AEST)

NEXT WEEK

Hyundai A-League Semi Final 1
Friday 12 April 2013
Western Sydney Wanderers (1)
v
TBC (lowest ranked winner of Elimination Finals)
Kick off 7.30pm (local)
Parramatta Stadium

Hyundai A-League Semi Final 2
Sunday 14 April 2013
Central Coast Mariners (2)
v
TBC (highest ranked winner of Elimination Finals)
Bluetongue Stadium, Gosford
Kick off 5.00pm (local)

ROUND 27 RESULTS

Brisbane Roar 3 (Besart BERISHA 29', Steven LUSTICA 51', Ivan FRANJIC 79')

Sydney FC 1
(Alessandro DEL PIERO (pen)84')
Crowd: 19,010 @ Suncorp Stadium

Newcastle Jets 0
Western Sydney Wanderers 3
(Bridge 5, 33, Visconte 80)
Crowd 22,518 at Hunter Stadium

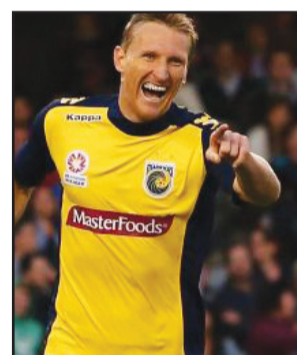
Central Coast Mariners 2
(McBreen 34p, Duke 63)
Melbourne Heart 1 (Garcia 73)
Crowd: 8,271 @ Bluetongue Stadium

Perth Glory 1 (Zahra 58)
Adelaide United 1
(Barker-Daish 90)
Crowd: 16,707 @ nib Stadium

Wellington Phoenix 2
(Huysegems 65, Brockie 66)
Melbourne Victory 3 (Rojas 10, Flores 56, Thompson 84)
Crowd 6,813 @ Westpac Stadium

TOP GOAL SCORERS

- 17 - Daniel McBREEN (Mariners)
- 16 - Jeremy BROCKIE (Phoenix)
- 15 - Marco ROJAS (Victory)
- 14 - Besart BERISHA (Roar)
- Alessandro DEL PIERO (SFC)
- 9 - Emile HESKEY (Jets)
- Ryan GRIFFITHS (Jets)
- Mark BRIDGE (Wanderers)
- Dario VIDOSIC (Adelaide)
- 8 - Mark MILLIGAN (Victory)



With a penalty for the Mariners in their 2-1 win over Melbourne Heart, Daniel McBreen has all but secured the Golden Boot for season 2013.

A-LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK Round 27

Compiled by
Steven Talevski



GK: Danny Vukovic – There's no doubt the Perth Glory goalkeeper made the most telling save on the weekend when he denied Dario Vidosic's free kick in the final minute of the game to send the Glory into the finals.

RCB: Patrick Zwaanswijk – With a number of team mates rested for the mid-week Asian Champions League match, Zwaanswijk stepped up to his usual best to help the Mariners enter the finals with a 2-1 victory over the Heart.

CB: Jade North – Rushed back into the squad from Socceroos duty, North was a clear standout in the Roar defence as they were able to hold out Alessandro Del Piero's Sydney FC to book a spot in the finals.

LCB: Nikolai Topor-Stanley – With the minor premiership on the line, Topor-Stanley combined well with his fellow defenders and goalkeeper to keep the Jets out of the back of the net as the Wanderers picked up three points and the Premiers Plate.

RDM: Oliver Bozanic – Bozanic showed glimpses this week of his best form as his work in the Mariners midfield helped them both in attack and defence in their victory against the Heart.

LDM: Luke Brattan – One of many Roar players who have stepped up leading into the finals, Brattan was superb in midfield with accurate passing that helped the Brisbane attack open up Sydney's defence.

RAM: Daniel McBreen – His sole goal this weekend did not only break the Mariners penalty curse but also handed him the A-Leagues Golden Boot.

LAM: Adrian Zahra – Although Goal! Weekly's team of the week this round was already filled with attackers, there was no question that Zahra deserved a spot as his opener against Adelaide helped the Glory narrowly make the finals.

RW: Ryo Nagai – He may not have found the back of the net, but Nagai was a massive headache for the Adelaide defence which had trouble keeping his influence out of the game.

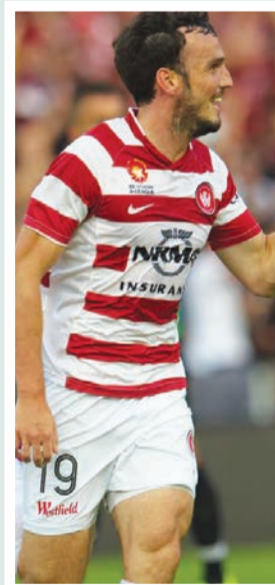
ST: Mark Bridge – With Newcastle needing a win to make the finals it was one of their former own who ended their campaign as Bridge found the back of the net twice to clinch Western Sydney the Premiers Plate.

LW: Marco Rojas – Back into the Victory squad after being away on international duty with New Zealand, Rojas found the back of the net within ten minutes, sending an ominous warning to the other A-league finalists.

Coach: Tony Popovic – It could not have gone any better for the Wanderers as they claimed a three nil victory over the Jets to win the Minor premiership. Much praise should go to Tony Popovic who managed his side to not only pick up the result this weekend but to send out a message to the rest of the A-League that they are the team to beat in the finals series, just in case others did not already know.

Star Man

Mark Bridge
Wanderers



He's two first half goals killed the game off early as the Wanderers clinched the Premiers Plate. Bridge was in fine form against he's old club with his two goals calmly finished in front of a packed Hunter Stadium to the delight of the travelling Red and Black Block.

Thank God It's Friday... **GW is available at all good newsagents every Friday**

Publisher:
Alimental Enterprises Pty Ltd
PO Box 142 Port Melb VIC 3207
Ph: 03 9551 7538

Distribution:
All Day Distribution
Tel: (03) 9482 1145

Advertising: 03 9551 7538
Email: news@goalweekly.com
Letters: mailbag@goalweekly.com
Web: www.goalweekly.com

Goal! Weekly endeavours to be as accurate as possible with everything it publishes.
The Fair Trading Act 1999 requires Goal! Weekly to disclaim any belief in the truth or falsity of information which is supplied to it and which is published in other than editorial content.

Follow us on: [facebook](#) [twitter](#)

goal!
Weekly

If your business or organisation would like to advertise or sponsor a page in GW please contact (03) 9551 7538 for further details

Brisbane Roar



3

Sydney FC



1

Match Details

Brisbane Roar 3 (Besart Berisha 29', Steven Lustica 51', Ivan Franjic 79')

Sydney FC 1 (Alessandro Del Piero (Pen)84')

Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane

Referee: Peter Green

Crowd: 19,010

Brisbane Roar: 1. Michael Theo (Gk), 3. Shane Stefanutto, 5. Ivan Franjic, 7. Besart Berisha, 13. Jade North, 14. Steven Lustica (8. Massimo Muroccca 76'), 15. James Donachie, 17. Mitch Nichols, 18. Luke Brattan, 19. Jack Hingert (11. Ben Halloran 82'), 22. Thomas Broich (C)

Substitutes Not Used: 9. Stefan Nijland, 20. Matt Acton (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Michael Theo 85'
Red Cards: Nil

Sydney FC: 1. Ivan Necevski (Gk), 2. Sebastian Ryall, 8. Adam Griffiths, 10. Alessandro Del Piero, 13. Tiago Calvano, 15. Terry Mcflynn (C) (3. Fabio 62'), 17. Terry Antonis (21. Yairo Yau 56'), 21. Ali Abbas (16. Joel Chianese 55'), 23. Rhyan Grant, 26. Peter Triantis, 29. Joel Griffiths

Substitutes Not Used: 20. Vedran Janjetovic (Gk),
Yellow Cards: Peter Triantis 32', Rhyan Grant 54', Adam Griffiths 70', Thiago Calvano 79'
Red Cards: Nil

Roar dispatch SFC and dream of title hat-trick

By Jarrod Ellis

Relief and anticipation. They were the prevailing emotions around Suncorp Stadium on Thursday night. Relief for the fact that the Roar had scraped into the finals, and anticipation for the belief that the Championship holders can still make it three in a row.

A first half goal from Besart Berisha and two more from Steve Lustica and Ivan Franjic in the second was enough to separate the two sides on a night that was practically a finals match come early.

Both Sydney and Brisbane entered the match in charge of their own destiny; a win would secure fifth place and finals football, whilst anything less could see the curtain drawn on season 2012-13.

Frank Farina's men will no doubt have rued their missed opportunity against Wanderers last weekend when they drew after leading with only twenty minutes to go.

That was the result that setup this must win clash with Brisbane, a team that Sydney has lost to on the last seven occasions that they've travelled to Suncorp Stadium.

On this occasion it was Brisbane that seized the three points once again, having the better of possession and seizing the opportunities provided to them.

The match was barely a minute old when Roar fans were out of their seats for the first time. A wonderful ball from a deep-lying Luke Brattan almost picked out Thomas Broich on the edge of the Sydney penalty box but the German's first touch let him down.

As the half progressed the play slowed and neither side could deliver the final pass. Luke Brattan and Peter Triantis both threatened from long range but neither Michael Theo nor Ivan Necevski needed to move from their position.

In the 28th minute Besart Berisha spurned a chance as he miscontrolled a pass with his chest but only seconds later he had put the ball in the back of the net.

Stunningly it was Del Piero at



	Match Stats	
4	Saves	0
4	Attempts on target	5
15	Attempts off target	10
64%	Possession	36%
6	Corners	7
4	Offsides	1
5	Fouls committed	9

The Den goes wild after Steven Lustica doubled the lead for the Roar, and the reigning champions take a huge step towards finals football and defending their A-League crown. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

fault, the Italian master displaying a lapse of concentration that proved costly.

Looking to play a pass back to his defence the ball ended up in no-man's land and left Ivan Franjic to snatch possession. The Roar wide man didn't waste the opportunity presented to him and crossed to an unmarked Berisha on the penalty spot, the striker finishing with aplomb.

Terry Antonis was unlucky not to have earned a one-on-one with Theo in the Brisbane goal just before the end of the half. The youngster was played a delightful slide ball from Del Piero but the lines-

men judged Antonis to be offside in what was a marginal call.

On the return to action Sydney took the initiative but in the 51st minute, against the run of play, Steve Lustica gave the home side a two-goal cushion.

Seb Ryall was caught in possession on the edge of the Sydney penalty area by Berisha and the first-half goal scorer turned provider, crossing low across the box to find Lustica free on the left of the area for a simple finish.

Sydney was unlucky not to claw a goal back in the 65th minute. Del Piero delivered a free kick from the right wing into the Roar pen-

alty area that was met by the head of Ryall, but his header skidded centimetres wide of the post.

With Sydney pushing men forward in search of an equaliser the game opened up, play soon going end-to-end as huge swathes of space opened between defence and midfield.

With so much space it was only a matter of time til another goal and it arrived with eleven minutes to play.

An over hit Mitch Nichols cross was collected Broich on the far side of the pitch. From there Broich passed to Ivan Franjic, waiting wide left at the top of Sydney's

box. Taking a touch Franjic then released a curling shot that flew across the face of goal before nestling into Necevski's net.

Sydney refused to let go of their hopes and in the 84th minute they pulled a goal back from the penalty spot. James Donachie was at fault, bringing Joel Griffiths to ground.

Del Piero stepped up to the spot and the set-piece master slotted the ball past Theo, but it was a case of too little too late for Sydney FC.

Man of the Match
Ivan Necesvki
(Sydney FC)



Alessandro Del Piero makes it goal number 14 in his debut A-League season, as Roar's Michael Theo dives in vain to save the spot-kick. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



Roar striker Besart Berisha smashes the ball home from the edge of the six-yard area, leaving SFC keeper Ivan Necevski with no chance. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



INVESTMENT PROPERTY SPECIALISTS

FROM

\$264,950

NRAS PROPERTIES ALSO AVAILABLE!!

CALL TODAY 1300 363 213



* NEW CONSTRUCTION GRANT SA, ENDS JUNE 30

CC Mariners



2

Melbourne Heart



1

Match Details

Central Coast Mariners 2
(McBreen 35'), (Duke 64')
Melbourne Heart 1 (Garcia 73')
Referee: Jarred Gillett
Bluetongue Stadium, Gosford
Attendance: 8,271

Mariners: 20. Justin Pasfield (GK), 2. Daniel McBreen, 4. Pedj Bojic, 5. Zac Anderson, 6. Patrick Zwaanswijk, 11. Oliver Bozanic, 13. Brent Griffiths (24. Hayden Morton), 15. Bradley McDonald, 17. Anthony Caceres (8. Adrian Pellegrino 69'), 21. Mile Sterjovski, 29. Nick Fitzgerald (19. Mitchell Duke 61')

Substitutes not used: 1. Matthew Ryan (GK),
Yellow: Anthony Caceres 18', Zac Anderson 86', Patrick Zwaanswijk 87'
Red: Nil

Melbourne Heart: 1. Clint Bolton (GK), 4. Simon Colosimo (36. Eli Babalj, 6. Patrick Gerhardt, 8. Matt Thompson, 10. Josip Tadic, (9. Dylan Macallister 57'), 11. Richard Garcia, 15. David Williams, 16. Marcel Meeuwis (17. Jason Hoffman 41'), 19. Ben Garuccio, 21. Jamie Coyne, 24. Sam Mitchinson

Substitutes not used: 20. Andrew Redmayne (GK), 36. Eli Babalj.
Yellow: Richard Garcia 46', Matt Thompson 81'
Red: Patrick Gerhardt 33'

By Adrian Deans

The fans were invited to come as Super Heroes for this game, but the real Super Heroes were dressed in red and black and relaxing in western Sydney.

It was always going to be an anti-climax – if the Wanderers had already pinched the Premiers' Plate. So it proved – a game in which neither side could improve their position on the table, so two teams went through the motions, with the Mariners in particular mindful of the need to perform well midweek in the Asian Champions League.

This meant a rest for several stars and starting berths for Brent Griffiths, Brad McDonald, Anthony Caceres and Nick Fitzgerald. Many have commented this year on how well the entire Mariners squad understands Arnie's system and you could have been forgiven for thinking they had their best eleven on the park. Ollie Bozanic performed John Hutchinson's usual role with aplomb, and Anthony Caceres had a blinder at his side.

Griffiths and McDonald also did pretty well and Arnie must have been generally delighted with the seamless segue to the bit-parters waiting in the wings.

Having said that, the first genuine chance fell to the Heart when Josip Tadic won a challenge on the half hour, found himself closing on goal and forced Pasfield into an excellent save.

The key moment of the game happened almost immediately afterwards. McDonald produced an amazing ball which found McBreen on the edge of the box. He rounded Clint Bolton but his shot was blocked on the line by Colosimo. The rebound fell to McBreen who squared for Sterjovski, whose goal-bound shot struck the arm of Patrick Gerhardt.

This was reminiscent of Harry Kewell's 'handball' on the line in South Africa. I was adamant that Harry had thrust his chest at the



Mitch Duke wastes no time in finding the net, only three minutes after coming on the park as substitute.

Photo:KAREN DOUGLAS

ball and, if it did strike his arm, it was accidental. The rules say that a handball must be deliberate.

This (for me) was just as hard to judge. Gerhardt threw himself at the ball and his arm was out, but that doesn't mean he was deliberately handling the ball. The referee, of course, must make a judgment on the spot and he was perfectly positioned. I'm not going to say he was wrong but a penalty and red card is a harsh double whammy. (In fact triple whammy, after John Aloisi was sent to the stand for overdoing his protest with the officials at half time.)

McBreen managed to convert the

penalty (after six straight misses by the team) and the Mariners never looked in trouble from there. The Mariners were in complete control after half time – especially after the introduction of new crowd favourite Mitchel Duke. He was only on the park a couple of minutes when he received Caceres' inside right channel ball and finished underneath Bolton.

I was particularly impressed with the performance of Caceres – of whom we've heard the hype – but in this game he lived up to it. His run to set up Duke was Rogic-like in its silken execution and he is going to be a very good player with a

bit more professional experience.

The Heart managed a consolation goal in the 73rd minute when Dylan McCallister bundled over Zach Anderson and calmly set up Garcia, but the Mariners closed down after that and there were no further opportunities.

It was a professional performance by the Mariners which got the job done, but a bit hard to gauge against such a lacklustre side as the Heart. As for the Heart, my biggest question was: why did Eli Babalj spend 88 minutes on the bench? He certainly put a bit of spark into the side (in two minutes plus injury time). And Tadic has hardly been

scoring for fun.

A question to be answered next season perhaps?

The Mariners march on to the finals but for Melbourne Heart, this blockbuster (some might say breakthrough) Version Eight of the A-League couldn't end quickly enough.

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets –available in all good book stores. Also coming shortly: Straight Jacket. Watch this space for further information.

Man of the Match
Anthony Caceres
(Mariners)

	Match Stats	
2	Saves	5
10	Attempts on target	3
7	Attempts off target	1
54%	Possession	46%
7	Corners	1
3	Offsides	4
7	Fouls committed	12



Daniel McBreen finally brings the Mariners' recent penalty woes of five consecutive misses to an end, by making no mistake on this occasion and sending Heart keeper Clint Bolton the wrong way. The goal also gave McBreen outright lead in the Golden Boot stakes. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS

Target 5000

*Terms and Conditions apply

Become a Mariners Member today and you could score yourself a Lifetime Membership!*

Show your support for the Central Coast Mariners and help us reach 5,000 Members!

SIGN UP NOW! **ONLINE:** ccmariners-memberships.com.au **PHONE:** 4353 7200

PART PAYMENTS
also available

Perth Glory

1



Adelaide United

1



Match Details

Perth Glory 1 (Zahra 58')
Adelaide United FC 1
 (Barker-Daish 90+1')
 Referee: Kris-Griffiths Jones
 Crowd: 16,707 @ nib Stadium

Perth Glory: 1.Danny Vukovic (gk), 5.Steve Pantelidis, 7.Jacob Burns (c), 8.Dean Heffernan, 11.Adrian Zahra (6.Nick Ward 76'), 12.Ryo Nagai (28.Daniel De Silva 86'), 14.Steven McGarry, 18.Matias Cordoba, 19.Josh Risdon, 21.Scott Jamison, 23.Michael Thwaite

Substitutes not used: 22.Ndumba Makeche, 30.Lewis Italiano (gk)
 Yellow Cards: Heffernan 56', Burns 70'
 Red Cards: Nil

Adelaide United: 1.Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c), 2.Osama Malik (18.Fabian Barbiero 62'), 4.Jon McKain, 5.Iain Fyfe, 10.Dario Vidolic, 11.Bruce Djite, 12.Antony Golec, 14.Cameron Watson, 17.Iain Ramsay (24.Awer Mabil 84'), 19.Jake Barker-Daish, 22.Fabio Ferreira (21.Jeronimo Neumann 69')

Substitutes not used: 20.Paul Izzo (gk)
 Yellow Cards: Djite 59', Neumann 84'
 Red Cards: Nil

By Gareth Morgan

A record home Hyundai A-League crowd of 16,707 roared Perth Glory into the finals on an unforgettable night at nib Stadium.

Adrian Zahra and Jake Barker-Daish both finding the net in the second-half as Perth Glory claimed the point needed to ensure their involvement in the knockout phase of the competition for the third time in four seasons.

Shrugging off the absence of several key first-team regulars, the hosts dominated the high-flying visitors right from the off and should have put the game well beyond Adelaide's reach before Barker-Daish's stoppage-time leveller ensured a frantic finale.

Glory coach Alistair Edwards had insisted that his side would play for the win regardless of what result was required in terms of qualifying for the finals and they did exactly that in a pulsating first-half, throwing bodies forward and stretching the United defence at every opportunity.

The new-look front three of Nagai, Adrian Zahra and Dean Heffernan impressed with their mobility, pace and work-rate, the latter emphasising his versatility by settling seamlessly into the unaccustomed role of centre-forward.

It was Nagai who carved out the first opportunity of the night, cutting in from the left and stinging Eugene Galekovic's gloves with a fierce right-foot strike before Bruce Djite reminded Glory of United's attacking threat, firstly heading narrowly over from an Iain Ramsay corner and then being foiled by a perfectly-timed Steve Pantelidis challenge as he prepared to pull from just inside the box.

But those offensive forays from the Reds steadily decreased as the half progressed, while Nagai continued to menace at the other end, tormenting Cameron Watson and eventually tempting the hapless full-back into impeding him as he raced into the box on 25 minutes.

And even after Galekovic produced a



Reds keeper Eugene Galekovic can't keep Adrian Zahra's header (No. 11) from crossing the line. Photo: CRAIG ECCLES

superb save to tip his spot-kick onto the post, the Japanese appeared undaunted, flashing another shot just over the bar two minutes later and then dragging an angled effort wide having been released via a slick one-two with Heffernan.

Heffernan almost bagged his second goal of the campaign moments later, his header from a Scott Jamieson corner drifting just off target and there was still time before the break for Zahra to escape the attentions of Anthony Golec down the Glory right and whip in a teasing cross which Nagai volleyed centimetres wide of Galekovic's right-hand post.

With the tension building around the ground as the second-half got underway, the on-field narrative remained the same with Glory continuing to dominate.

On 52 minutes they again came agonisingly close to breaking the deadlock, Zahra turning neatly in the box only to shoot wide having been teed up by the tireless Heffernan.

But the former Melbourne Heart man was not to be denied six minutes later, this time reacting quickest to a cross driven in by McGarry and forcing the ball past Galekovic despite the best efforts of the informal 'keeper who almost pulled off another of his trademark wonder-stops.

Zahra's spectacular summersault celebration was one to savour, as was the reaction of the home fans whose thunderous reaction tested out the foundations of the new Eastern Stand.

Glory then proceeded to keep the ball as effectively as they have all season, content to patiently build

from the back and keep a tiring Adelaide side on the move.

The visitors did almost conjure a leveller on 76 minutes, Vidolic carving out an opportunity for substitute Jeronimo Neumann who just failed to claim what would have been his third goal against Glory this season when he scuffed wide from close range.

Normal service was swiftly resumed, however, with Glory again carving the Reds' defence open, this time through Heffernan, only for Steven McGarry to somehow fire wide with the goal gaping.

Clearly relishing his new advanced role, an undeterred Heffernan duly laid on another gilt-edged opportunity five minutes from the end, with substitute Daniel De Silva this time the recipient.

As the Shed prepared to celebrate

a fairytale goal from the 16-year-old prodigy, however, he directed his downward header just wide of the far post.

And then came the sting in the tail as the Glory rearguard failed to clear a Watson cross and Barker-Daish found the net to set up an agonising final three minutes of stoppage time.

Hearts were well and truly in mouths when Vidolic fired a long-range free-kick towards the top corner with what proved to be the final kick of the game, but Danny Vukovic, who had barely been called into action all night, went full-length to his right to keep the ball out and his side's season alive.

Man of the Match
Dean Heffernan
 (Perth Glory)



Glory Boys: The final whistle is greeted with jubilation by Matias Cardoba (18), Steven McGaerry (14) and Steve Pantelidis (5). Photo CRAIG ECCLES



Adelaide United's Jake Barker-Daish (No. 19) scores at the death to give Perth Glory fans a nervous finale to an enthralling encounter. Photo: CRAIG ECCLES

RAIN. HAIL. SHINE



Scan the QR code to see our new television commercial!
 Get ready for Melbourne Heart's most exciting season yet. We've got Soccerroo legend John Aloisi on board as manager and now we need you! This season our members take centre stage. Become our No.12 and together we will triumph. With 13 massive home games and a great range of membership options - it's time to play your part! Join online at melbourneheartfc.com.au or call 1300 ALL HEART (255 432).

HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE | Westfield | FOX SPORTS | BDO | ELA TROPHY | PT

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME



PICS OF ROUND 27



Les Shorrock's
Action Packed
Picture Page



Perth Glory players mob Adrian Zahra after his crucial goal.
Photo: CRAIG ECCLES



A record crowd of over 16,000 was on hand to open the new grandstand at nib Stadium and cheer on the Glory to finals football. Photo: CRAIG ECCLES



The blimp at nib has the best seat in the new house in the West. PHOTO: CRAIG ECCLES



Superman and Batman popped into Bluetongue to catch the mariners play Heart. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS



With the kings of the jungle on your side, who is to argue with Besart Berisha and Roar's title juggernaut. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



Superheroes take to the terraces to spur on the Mariners. PHOTO: KAREN DOUGLAS



Roar's Besart Berisha is head and shoulders above the rest! Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



The hall of Justice comes out to play football! Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS



Victory Line Up

1. Tando Velaphi (GK)
5. Mark Milligan
6. Leigh Broxham
9. Marcos Flores
10. Archie Thompson
11. Marco Rojas
13. Diogo Ferreira
14. Billy Celeski
17. Jimmy Jeggo
18. Francesco Stella
21. Spase Dilevski
23. Adrian Leijer
26. Andrew Nabbout
27. Christopher Cristaldo
30. Jason Geria
31. Scott Galloway
32. Connor Pain
33. Daniel Mullen
34. Dylan Murnane
39. Nathan Coe (GK) (three to be omitted)

Ins: 13. Diogo Ferreira, 17. Jimmy Jeggo, 18. Francesco Stella, 21. Spase Dilevski, 26. Andrew Nabbout, 34. Dylan Murnane.

Outs: Nil

Unavailable: Gui Finkler (knee), Nick Ansell (groin), Adama Traore (ankle), Jesse Makarounas (hamstring)



Adelaide Utd Line Up

1.Eugene Galekovic (c)
2.Osama Malik
3.Nigel Boogaard
4.Jon McKain
5.Iain Fyfe
6.Cassio
8.Marcelo Carrusca
10.Dario Vidosic
11.Bruce Djite
12.Antony Golec
14.Cameron Watson
15.Jacob Melling
16.Daniel Bowles
17.Iain Ramsay
18.Fabian Barbiero
19.Jake Barker-Daish
20.Paul Izzo (gk)
21.Jeronimo Neumann
22.Fabio Ferreira
23.Evan Kostopoulos
24.Awer Mabil
25.Tomi Juric (Six to be omitted)

Ins: Nigel Boogaard (returns from suspension), Cassio (returns from injury), Marcelo Carrusca (returns from injury), Jacob Melling, Daniel Bowles, Evan Kostopoulos, Tomi Juric (promoted)

Outs: Nil

Unavailable: Nil

Melb Victory (3) v Perth Glory (6)

By Andrew Bishara

Well, it's all come down to this. The finals. Teams have fought all year to be in this position and this Friday, we got 3rd versus 6th: Melbourne Victory taking on the Perth Glory. Elimination final.

First, to the Victory. With their finals position already wrapped up weeks ago, the Melbourne team really let things slide – their form has been less than impressive in their run in to the finals. Eight points from their last five games is good gathering, but overall their performances haven't been up to scratch.

The problem with the Victory is defensive they are well below standards. It's a typical case "we'll score one more than you" routine, and that's the reason that they've made the finals: their impressive firepower. The trio of Flores, Thompson and Rojas is as dangerous as any other in the league. But it's the lesser-known players, including Connor Pain that has, time and time again, pulled the rabbit out of the hat.

More so, they lack depth, with Ange Postecoglou admitting that without their "big guns", they struggle to break down teams. Yet the Victory are worthy of finishing third, their passion and guts to fight for the result, a part of the Postecoglou mantra.

Their challengers, the Glory will

Elimination Final 1

Head-to-Head

Played 24
Victory 9
Glory FC 10
Drawn 5

The Odds

Victory 1.77
Draw 3.50
Glory 5.00

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #ALeagueFinals

Referee: Jarred Gillett

not be easy task to overcome. Two weeks ago, the Glory outran the Victory to record an impressive 3-2 win. Credit to the Glory, who have had a remarkable turnaround since the departure of Ian Ferguson.

New boss, Alistair Edwards has completely revitalised the squad, and after languishing dead last, stormed home, winning four of the last seven games. Ferguson was more prone to the "defence first" mentality, which saw the team struggle to score as they tailed off during the season. It seemed harsh to fire the coach that led the team to its first grand final, but Edwards' results shows

Fri 5 Apr Etihad Stdm 7.30pm (local)

Victory ready to fight off Glory

that the team needed a change. The good news is that the Glory will welcome back classy midfielder Liam Miller, who returns from suspension. But the main concern for the Glory is the lack of firepower up front. Since Billy Mehmet's departure, and Travis Dodd needing a knee reconstruction, the Glory only have Shane Smeltz on the books. But he's only a "50-50" chance.

Victory on the other hand, have all their big guns back for the clash with Rojas cleared of serious injury after hobbling off in Wellington.

Finals are decided by the little things: the intensity, the pressure

is ramped up and any mistake can prove to be deadly. Perth are the form team coming into the game, but the Victory have that extra bit of class when needed. Playing in front of a vocal home crowd can only mean a good thing for the Victory, plus after Postecoglou's spray two weeks ago, the Victory will come out firing, fully knowing what to expect from the Glory.

This being sudden death, expect this to go to the death. Melbourne to edge the Victory. But only just.

**Kiss of Death
Victory 1-0 Glory**



Glory Line Up

1.Danny Vukovic (gk)
2.Jack Clisby
5.Steve Pantelidis
7.Jacob Burns
8.Dean Heffernan
9.Shane Smeltz
10.Liam Miller
11.Adrian Zahra
12.Ryo Nagai
14.Steven McGarry
18.Matias Cordoba
19.Josh Risdon
21.Scott Jamison
23.Michael Thwaite
28.Daniel De Silva
30 Lewis Italiano (gk)

Ins: 2.Jack Clisby (promoted), 9.Shane Smeltz (returns from injury), 10.Liam Miller (returns from suspension).

Out: 6.Nick Ward, 22.Ndumba Makeche (both omitted).

Unavailable: 13.Travis Dodd (Knee: 9-12 months), 17.Chris Harold (calf – 2-3 weeks).

Adelaide Utd (4) v Brisbane Roar (5)

By Matt Mays

Adelaide United will be trying to shrug off their recent cobwebs and progress into the prelim finals but they have to beat a Brisbane side that are unbeaten at Hindmarsh this season.

In recent form, Brisbane is coming to Adelaide next Sunday night as favourites, despite finishing a place below their opponents. Brisbane have only lost 1 of their last 7 games and their impressive form have seen then steak a small claim in regaining their A League crown in this new look Elimination Finals Series 2013.

Adelaide however is struggling to score goals. Earlier in the year they were scoring goals for fun, but their recent slump has only seen them sink 4 goals in their last 5 league games, picking up just 1 win in their last 7. Despite the poor form though, Valkanis is relishing the tie and says he is content that his side are being labelled as the 'underdog.'

"I'm really happy, like in previous years at Adelaide United, that we go into the finals series as underdogs, it's a great feeling."

"We play best when our backs are against the wall. I like that, and so do my players."

Team news is pretty quiet but Adelaide is hopeful of welcoming back key midfield maestro Carrusca after he picked up a groin injury against the Newcastle Jets 3 weeks ago.

Elimination Final 2

Head-to-Head

Played 25
AUFC 9
Roar 8
Drawn 8

The Odds

AUFC 3.10
Draw 3.40
Roar 2.40

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #ALeagueFinals

Referee: Chris Beath

Brisbane Roar coach Mike Mulvey has been saying how impressed he has been with his clubs recent form but is very wary that his side should not be counting their chickens just yet.

"I feel like we're playing good football and the players are in good spirits, which was there for all to see last Thursday night [against Sydney FC]. But we're not taking anything for granted – we're on an upwards spiral but we must continue to improve and continue to work hard – that's our mindset."

Brisbane look to have a near full strength squad for their sudden death visit to Adelaide.

The Reds have had some positive news this week in preparation

for the finals series with the club signing up a healthy \$1million shirt sponsorship deal with 'Clean Energy Enterprises.' Let's hope the Reds can clean out their bad recent energy in the sheds and shine some light into a good performance.

Defending champions Roar though will have something to say about that, and the betting looks to be in their favour. SportingBet are offering Brisbane winning in 90 minutes as \$2.40, whereas the home team are paying at \$2.85.

**Kiss of Death
AUFC 2-3 Roar (AET)**

As A Matter Of Fact

- Boxing Day marked the last time Henrique scored a goal in the Roar's 1-0 win over Adelaide
- Neither team has managed to score more than one goal in the last four clashes between the teams
- Brisbane Roar have enjoyed their trips to Adelaide of late, notching wins on three of their last five visits to Hindmarsh Stadium
- Adelaide boast an impressive home record this season, winning eight of their eleven clashes at Hindmarsh Stadium



Roar Line Up

1. Michael Theo (gk)
3. Shane Stefanutto
4. Matt Jurman
5. Ivan Franjic
7. Besart Berisha
8. Massimo Murdocca
9. Stef Nijland
10. Henrique
11. Ben Halloran
12. Julius Doe
13. Jade North
14. Steven Lustica
15. James Donachie
17. Mitch Nichols
18. Luke Brattan
19. Jack Hingert
20. Matt Acton (gk)
22. Thomas Broich (c)
21. James Meyer
25. George Lambadaridis
26. Corey Brown (Four to be omitted)

Ins: 4. Matt Jurman (promoted), 10. Henrique (promoted), 12. Julius Doe, 21. James Meyer (promoted), 25. George Lambadaridis (promoted), 26. Corey Brown (promoted)
Outs: Nil
Unavailable: 2. Matt Smith (hip – season)

Newcastle Jets Official Merchandise available from:
Hunter Sports Superstore
Ausgrid Stadium, 294 Turton Road,
New Lambton NSW 2305

Get your Jets Gear Online at:
www.newcastlejets.com.au

facebook.com/NewcastleJetsFC
twitter.com/NewcastleJetsFC
youtube.com/JetsNewcastle

JETS MEMBERS GET 10% OFF MERCH

JETS GEAR IS ALSO AVAILABLE AT MATCHDAY OUTLETS ON THE EASTERN AND WESTERN CONCOURSE



NEWCASTLE JETS OFFICIAL MERCHANDISE

BUY DIRECT AND YOU'LL ENSURE 100% OF PROFITS STAY WITH THE JETS



MELBOURNE VICTORY FC

National Youth League Champions

SEASON 2012/13



PHOTO: ANITA MILAS

Back Row – Anthony Di Pietro (Chairman), Luke Radonich, Damien Miskulin, Nick Symeoy, Luke O’Dea, Jake Nakic, Darren Davies (Coach), Aaron D’Antino, Nick Ansell, Vaughn Coveny (Asst. Coach), Dean Anastasiadis (GK Coach), Richard Wilson.
 Front Row – Luc Jeggo, Phil Petrovski, Jordan Brown, Kwabene Boahene, John Buceto, Hernan Espindola, Daniel Chabaani

Final Standings		P	W	D	L	F	A	P
1	Melbourne Victory	17	12	0	5	57	20	37 36
2	CC Mariners	17	12	0	5	38	27	11 36
3	Newcastle Jets FC	18	10	1	7	52	36	16 31
4	Brisbane Roar FC	18	9	3	6	39	34	5 30
5	Perth Glory	18	8	1	9	45	45	0 25
6	Melbourne Heart	18	8	1	9	31	34	-3 25
7	WS Wanderers	18	7	4	7	29	39	-10 25
8	Adelaide United	18	6	4	8	35	42	-7 22
9	Sydney FC	18	6	3	9	41	46	-5 21
10	AIS	18	2	1	14	24	68	-44 7

*Victory awarded title by virtue of last game of the season versus Mariners being postponed twice.
 *Brisbane Roar docked three points for rule breaches.





By Tyson Scott

CENTRAL Coast Mariners out-classed China's Guizhou Renhe in Gosford on Wednesday, securing a crucial 2-1 AFC Champions League Group H victory.

The Mariners enhanced their chances of qualifying for the knock-out phase of Asia's premier club competition via second half goals from defensive duo Pedj Bojic and Trent Sainsbury.

Bojic put the Mariners ahead early in the second half with a stunning left foot strike, before the dangerous Zvezdan Misimovic floated in a troublesome free kick on 71 minutes for Guizhou. Unfortunately for Graham Arnold's team, outstanding left back Joshua Rose glanced Misimovic's effort onto the post before the ball found its way into the net via the chest of Mariners custodian Mathew Ryan.

Central Coast showed character late in their dominant performance, and sealed a deserved win - just their second ever in the AFC Champions League - in the 80th minute.

The impressive Michael McGlinchey's turned his defender inside out wide on the right, before delivering an inch-perfect cross to a charging Sainsbury. The 21-year-old made no mistake in placing his commanding header into the back of the net to deliver Central Coast all

Mariners Open Asian Account

three points, and score his first ever competitive goal for the Club.

The win propelled the Mariners to four points from three AFC Champions League matchdays, ensuring their fate in this year's competition is well and truly in their own hands heading into the second half of the group stage.

Despite the game being goalless at halftime, the first 45 was full of energy as the sides moved the ball around swiftly on the slick surface.

The first talking point of the match was an apparent handball committed by Guizhou's Wu Wei in his own area just three minutes in that was overlooked by the officials.

Former German Bundesliga winner Misimovic is known for his dangerous free kicks and whipped one in from the left side in the seventh minute. The vicious cross made its way through several defenders and just eluded the onrushing Yu Hai.

The Mariners looked to be on top for majority of the first half although the biggest chance of the opening stanza fell to Gong Lei's team in the 32nd minute through Zlatan Muslimovic.

The former Udinese attacker found himself one-on-one with Ryan after linking up well with his countryman Misimovic. Muslimovic's first touch was just too heavy, with Ryan able to thwart his close range shot. With the ball loose, Ryan reached around Muslimovic and pulled the ball onto the attacker and over the goal line.

The second half took off in cracking fashion with the Mariners' elusive wingback Bojic bending a shot from outside the area beyond Guizhou 'keeper Zhang Li just six minutes after the restart.

After some positive Guizhou play, the Mariners crafted two good chances to extend their advantage in quick succession.



Pedj Bojic opens the scoring for the Central Coast Mariners

First, Bernie Ibini fired off a powerful shot that was stopped by Zhang, while in the 57th minute the Hyundai A-League's Golden Boot winner, Daniel McBreen, had a chance to double his side's lead from close range. Unfortunately, McBreen sent his shot over the bar following strong work from Rose and Ibini.

It was a Central Coast own goal that levelled the scores in Gosford with

less than 20 minutes remaining, before Sainsbury made no mistake with his header ten minutes from time to win the game for the hosts.

Following the game, Central Coast Mariners boss Arnold said his team knew the game against Guizhou was a "must win", and expressed his delight in his team's performance against one of China's biggest clubs.

"Three points was a must tonight,"

Arnold said. "It was either three points or bust for us."

"To be able to get the three points and perform that way was exceptional."

"It could have easily been three or four nil before they scored. It was a very sloppy goal to give away. We gave them energy to get back into the game, but overall it was a fantastic performance."

"I think we've shown over the last three years that we belong in the (AFC) Champions League."

Central Coast Mariners play their next AFC Champions League fixture on Tuesday 9 April away to Guizhou Renhe in Guiyang.

With Japan's Kashiwa Reysol having dismantled Korea Republic's Suwon Bluewings 6-2 in the other Group H game played on Wednesday, a positive result in China would further enhance the Mariners' hopes of reaching the last 16 of Asia's top club competition.

Barisic fires East Bengal past Tampines

Australian striker Andrew Barisic scored twice as East Bengal defeated Tampines Rovers 4-2 to move top of the AFC Cup's Group H.

Barisic scored twice in the second half as East Bengal claimed their second victory of the 2013 AFC Cup, rising above Vietnam's Xuan Thanh Sai Gon to the top of Group H on goal difference.

East Bengal took the lead in unusual fashion on Wednesday when Tampines captain Anaz bin Abdul Hadee thumped the ball into his own net in the 19th minute.

An East Bengal corner was flicked on at the near post and then knocked towards Abdul Hadee, who failed to control the ball and then desperately tried to clear it with his right foot, only to send it into the roof of the net.

Tampines were level at half-time

Central Coast Mariners 2 (Bojic 51', Sainsbury 80')
Guizhou Renhe 1 (Ryan (Og) 71')

Central Coast Mariners (Aus):
 1. Mathew Ryan (Gk), 2. Daniel McBreen, 3. Joshua Rose, 4. Pedj Bojic, 6. Patrick Zwaanswijk, 7. John Hutchinson (C), 9. Bernie Ibini, 14. Michael McGlinchey, 16. Trent Sainsbury, 18. Nick Montgomery (11. Oliver Bozanic 84'), 21. Mile Sterjovski

Substitutes Not Used: 13. Brent Griffiths, 15. Brad McDonald, 17. Anthony Caceres, 20. Justin Pasfield (Gk), 24. Hayden Morton, 29. Nick Fitzgerald
 Yellow Cards: Hutchinson, Ibini
 Red Cards: Nil

Guizhou Renhe (Chn): 4. Jonas Salley, 5. Wu Wei (13. Shi Liang 68'), 7. Nano, 9. Zlatan Muslimovic, 10. Zvezdan Misimovic, 12. Zhang Lie (Gk), 15. Chen Jie (25. Li Kai 58'), 17. Sun Jihai (C), 21. Yu Hai, 29. Yang Hao (14. Yang Yihu 85'), 31. Rao Weihui
 Substitutes Not Used: 1. Jun Shen (Gk), 8. Li Chunyu, 27. Qu Bo, 37. Yu Rui
 Yellow Cards: Kai
 Red Cards: Nil

Central Coast Stadium, Gosford
 Referee: Abdullah Baloushi (Qatar)

Group H Standings									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	
1 Kashiwa	3	3	0	0	10	3	+7	9	
2 Mariners	3	1	1	1	3	4	-1	4	
3 Suwon	3	0	2	1	2	6	-4	2	
4 Guizhou	3	0	1	2	1	3	-2	1	

thanks to Sead Hadzibulic's strike but Barisic put the visitors back in front at Jalan Besar Stadium just after the hour mark.

A-League attendances rise as momentum thrives

A-League Rewind



By Robert Di Fabio

The 2012-13 A-League season has been a tremendous success on numerous fronts. The introduction of expansion outfit Western Sydney Wanderers has added much enthusiasm, and excitement to the competition. The addition of three marquee stars has given the league a worldwide portfolio, while the football on the pitch continues to intensify, from a tactical and technical perspective each year.

Following the completion of the regular home and away campaign, the A-League is proud to reveal that it has set a new attendance record of 1,666,942 throughout the course of the season.

The aggregate crowd-figure has surpassed the previous record in 2011-12, by over a whopping 250,000.

The hike in attendances this season further illustrates the growing popularity of football around the nation, and specifically the A-League competition. More Australians are involved in football than ever before, with participation rates cultivating each year from the grassroots level, spiralling through to the support of the nation's domestic competition.

The 18 per cent rise in overall attendances this season has been a feel-good story for the code, and only indicates an upward trend in years to come. Football Federation Australia CEO David Gallop is delighted by the game's development this season, and believes the A-League will only continue to grow and become a more sustainable competition in the near future.

"This season more Australians have watched the Hyundai A-League live in our venues than ever before," Gallop said.

"What they've experienced is the best standard of football our competition has ever seen and the best live atmosphere in Australian sport.

"The growth is the end product of hard work and investment by 10 clubs. I thank the fans all over Australia for making this an unforgettable season."

Since the A-League expanded

from its original eight-team format in the 2009-10, this season's average attendance of 12,348 has hit a new record.

To coincide with the spike in crowd attendances, there was an 18 per cent rise in TV audiences, with just under 80,000 tuning in each game – a record since the A-League's inception. For the first time, TV audiences also eclipsed 10 million for the season. It's a fantastic achievement, and further validates the competition's growing popularity.

While gate-taking and TV audiences have been on the up, so has the use on digital platforms and social media. There has been a 40 per cent increase in digital platforms, while a 105 per cent cumulative increase across all A-League channels on Facebook and Twitter. It's a significant rise, and once again demonstrates why football is the sleeping giant of Australian sport.

"The A-League is not just on the move, it's expanding massively in the mainstream of Australian society and capturing thousands of new fans live, on TV and in the digital space," Gallop said.

"Importantly, we are riding a demographic wave. We are a young, exciting and international sport. We represent the diversity of Australian society like no other.

"Now we enter the new-look

Hyundai A-League Finals Series that will showcase all that's great about the competition into an action packed three weeks of sudden death football."

As we enter the new-look finals series, we reflect on what has, thus far been a fantastic year for the A-League. Whilst the figures are all encouraging, we must remember that the competition had a similar trend a few years back.

In the 2007-08 season, the A-League set its highest average attendance of 14,610. The previous year, it was 12,297. While this season's average gate-attendance was the third best on record, there is still much work to be done.

After the record set in 2007-08, crowds dipped to under an average of 10,000 in 2009-10, and at its worst, a meagre average of 8,393 in the 2010-11 campaign.

In the past two years, we have seen two expansion clubs – Gold Coast United and North Queensland Fury – disbanded from the competition. Western Sydney has been an obvious success story off and on the pitch, although the same cannot be said about Melbourne Heart.

Since its inclusion in the 2010-11 campaign, the red and whites have failed to make a significant imprint in the Melbourne sporting landscape. When dissecting

Hyundai Goal for Grassroots

Congratulations to East Gosford Football Club for being selected as the Hyundai Goals For Grassroots junior club for Round 27. By virtue of Central Coast Mariners scoring two goal this round, the club received a \$3000 grant courtesy of Hyundai.

To nominate your club visit www.goalsforgrassroots.com.au

the club's average home attendances this season – excluding the Melbourne Derby and the visit of Alessandro Del Piero's Sydney FC – their average was under 6,500. If we include those two fixtures, it was 8,484.

In the heartland of Australian sport, those figures are simply unacceptable for any elite sporting franchise. Yes, results haven't been great – finishing equal last on the table with cellar-dweller Wellington Phoenix – however something must be done to get people through the turnstiles.

Was it the right move to include a new team, with visibly no market differentiation, playing at the same stadium, in direct competition with the A-League's biggest and most successful club in Melbourne Victory?

The jury is still out on this, however given the FFA's decision to expand into Melbourne, and with an impending TV deal coming in next season, we can assume FFA will persist with the Heart.

The addition of the Melbourne

Derby has undoubtedly been an exceptional advertisement for the A-League in its past three seasons. The enmity between the clubs is evident, the atmosphere is electric, and the entertainment has been first-class. However, a club's existence cannot primarily be to offer a cross-town rivalry, it must form its own identity and write its own story.

It's important that the competition continues on its current wave of momentum. In July, the A-League All Stars will lock horns with English powerhouse Manchester United in Sydney, while Melbourne Victory will entertain five-time European champions Liverpool at the MCG.

The ambition to succeed is more evident than ever. Under the guidance of Gallop, football is heading in the right direction.

Follow Robert on Twitter @RobertDiFabio



Santo, Sam & Ed Podcast

Santo Cilauro, Sam Pang and Ed Kavalee are back in town with their own unique take on events of the week.

Their brief is simple - 7 days, 3 guys, no agenda.

Podcast available on iTunes

<http://itun.es/au/dOdQl.c>

Facebook: Santo, Sam and Ed

Twitter: @SantoSamEd





MELBOURNE
Victory
F.C.

- 7 cui rinkler
- 6 leigh brookham
- marcos flores
- 10 archie thompson
- adrian leijer
- marco trobas
- 14 billy celestki
- 5 mark milligan
- adama traore
- 21 spase vileuski
- 26 andrew nabbord
- 17 jimmy jenna
- matthew roschini
- 16 theo markhelis
- 15 sam callagher
- jonathan bru
- 22 jesse maharounas
- 31 scott calloway
- 20 thomas
- 34 dylan murnane
- francesco stella
- 32 pain
- 33 daniel mullen
- 30 geria
- christopher cristaldo
- 27
- nicholas ansell
- 24
- l tando melaphi
- ange postecoglou SUPER Coach
- steve maulone Goalkeeper Coach
- hevin muscat Assistant Coach
- peter chlamoski Strength & Conditioning Coach
- travis maude Head of Physiotherapy

photos and design
anita milas

goal!
Weekly

FFV State League Division One Prepares For Kick Off

By Vic Brincat

The 2013 State League 1st division kicks off this weekend amidst confusion as to what lays ahead for most clubs at the end of this season. The F.F.V. intends to kick off the new National Premier League in 2014, but as yet nothing concrete has been established about the proposed new competition.

This is not an ideal situation for clubs, who are entitled to know what is in store and how to prepare for the upcoming season. In the mean time all first division clubs have been hard at it in preparation for the new season and a close and exciting season awaits all supporters.

Last season's two relegated clubs from the V.P.L. **Moreland Zebras** and **Heidelberg United** have put a bad season behind them and are expected to be amongst the front runners to make a quick return to the Premier league. The Zebras have appointed former player Danny Gnadjic to lead them back to the top and the club has recruited well in the off-season. Two of the Zebras' biggest signings are Joel Nikolic and Mile Medjedovic from Green Gully.

Heidelberg United have also made their intentions clear for a quick return to the V.P.L. and will consider anything but a failure. The 1st division will feature three newly promoted clubs in **Fawkner Blues**, **Eastern Lions** and **Box Hill United**.

Fawkner under the guidance of Andy O'Dell romped away in the 2nd Division North / West last season and are expected to continue on from where they left off. Andy O'Dell will get the best from his players and Fawkner will be a force.

Eastern Lions will be returning to the 1st division after an absence of 34 years and will make every post a



Nick Kokolakis (centre) and Matt Collier share the moment with Box Hill's jubilant fans after the team's win against Whittlesea Ranges in last season's Play-Off secured promotion to Division One.

Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

winner in this their 50th anniversary season. The Lions were exceptionally competitive when they won the 2nd division South / East title last year and any team thinking this team will be easy beats, will do so at their own peril.

Box Hill United too will be making a return to the 1st division after many years in the wilderness. The club has seen a massive revamp since the amalgamation of Southern Suburbs and Box Hill. The atmosphere at the club is very upbeat and after winning promotion through the play-off watch out for the boys from Wembley Park.

Altona Magic ended last season in third place and will be looking to go one better this season. Magic has always been a very well assembled side and another good season looks in store once again. Magic coach Pece Stojesci says he is satisfied with his pre-season plans and that his team is ready for the task ahead. Magic will field a youthful team mixed with a blend of experienced players.

North Geelong Warriors surprised many with their high 4th place finish last season. The Warriors will go into battle under new coach Mario Jurjevic who takes over from Ante Skoko. The club will pursue the youth policy that

has bore fruit and will once again ensure North Geelong be one of the teams pushing for promotion.

Werribee City did very well to finish 5th in their debut season last year and with added experience 'The Bees' will be buzzing again this season. Ably led by experienced coach Nino Ragusa, Werribee will be out to make this a big year at their newly developed Galvin Park ground.

FC Bulleen Lions will be out to erase a poor 2012 season. The mid-table finish was not good enough for the ambitious Bulleen club and coach John Waddell will be looking for a vastly improved effort this sea-

son. Expect to see the Lions roaring again in 2013.

Western Suburbs goes about their business in a quiet and efficient way. The club has been in the 1st division since relegated from the V.P.L. in 2008. Suburbs has always been competitive in this division and seem to do more than enough to steer well clear of the relegation zone. The team will be guided by second term coach Huss Skenderovic and the no-nonsense coach will be aiming to steer Suburbs for a top six finish this season.

Sunshine George Cross has gone on a recruiting mission with 11 new players added to the roster. The Georgies have had strong squads since their demise from the V.P.L. in 2010, but has struggled in the 1st division in the past two seasons. The squad assembled this season once again looks very strong, but it remains to be seen whether this group can deliver on the park.

St. Albans Saints has also disappointed having narrowly avoided the relegation play-off spot last season. The Saints will be hoping the new squad assembled this season will not see them languishing at the foot of the table. If former Melbourne Victory player Tom Pondeljak can maintain fitness 'The Saints' could be vastly improved.

This week's first round matches:
MORELAND ZEBRAS Vs FC BULLEEN LIONS.

Venue: Reddish Reserve on Saturday 3.00pm.

The season kicks off on Saturday with an intriguing clash between relegated Moreland Zebras and Bulleen Lions at Reddish Reserve Hadfield. Both will want to kick start their season with a win, but a draw is the more likely outcome.

SUNSHINE GEORGE CROSS Vs BOX HILL UNITED.

Venue: Chaplin Reserve on Sunday at 3.00pm.

The Georgies welcomes Box Hill to Chaplin Reserve on Sunday afternoon for what should be a hard fought match. Box Hill will want to impress on their 1st division debut, but the Georgies will not be in a charity mood and should take the 3 points.

WERRIEBEE CITY Vs ST. ALBANS SAINTS. **Venue: Galvin Park on Sunday at 3.00pm.** The Bees make their long awaited return to the upgraded Galvin Park and will give St. Albans a torrid welcome. The home side appear too well prepared for this clash and should take all 3 points.

HEIDELBERG UNITED Vs FAWKNER BLUES. **Venue: Olympic Village on Sunday at 3.00pm.** This will be a clash of two former greats who will be meeting for the first time since 2008. Both want to impress in the opening round but with home ground advantage Heidelberg should be too strong.

ALTONA MAGIC Vs NORTH GEELONG WARRIORS.

Venue: Paisley Park on Sunday at 3.00pm. These two sides finished 3rd and 4th in the 1st division last season and this match will be just as close as their final placings on the ladder. The Magic has lost a few of their experienced players and it remains to be seen if the youngsters stepping up can maintain the high standard. The Warriors will not take a backward step and supporters can expect a keenly contested clash in what is the match of the round.

WESTERN SUBURBS Vs EASTERN LIONS.

Venue: Ralph Reserve on Sunday at 3.00pm. This will be a close match with the visiting Lions keen to start off on the front foot. Suburbs has stood the test of time and at home might just get the better of the 1st division newcomers.

The other clubs did not submit squad lists in time of going to press.

Boo's World

SUMMER SERIES



By Mark Boric

It's finals time in the A-League, a chance to reflect on the losers who missed out. Just missing out, in seventh position, were Sydney FC. Despite being well-beaten by Brisbane Roar on the Thursday before Easter, they were not eliminated from the Finals race until Perth Glory picked up a point against Adelaide United on Easter Saturday. Glory took the last place in the finals by virtue of having an eight goal better goal difference than the Sky Blues.

Some countries have child labour laws, but I'm not sure if any nations have rules to look after older workers. Surely it isn't right that an old man like Alessandro Del Piero should have to carry a club on his own? It was a season of high drama, from Ian Crook getting the boot early on to Jason Culina told to hit the road after a run-in with Frank Farina. No longer the only team in town, they already face being upstaged by their little brother.

One point away from Finals



ADP shone throughout the season for SFC but unfortunately fans won't see him in finals action.

action were Newcastle Jets. Sydney FC's loss gave them a lifeline, for a day until Good Friday saw them succumb 0-3 at home to Western Sydney Wanderers. It was a record crowd at Hunter Stadium, away fans in the main, that witnessed the standard garbage we have come to expect from the Jets this season. The more dire the situation became, the more ambitious the shots from Ruben Zadkovich were. No patron in the back row of the stand or corner flag was safe. Adam Taggart, who inexplicably makes second-string Socceroos squads, showed why he is better left on the bench or out of the squad altogether.

Jets owner Nathan Tinkler's financial woes continue. The license may well end up back in the hands of the FFA, as he now tries to sell his horse racing empire for a lot less than he paid for it and probably owes on it. The donkeys of the Jets, however, will not have to be put

through the Magic Millions sales ring.

Avoiding the wooden spoon on goal difference were Melbourne Heart. The ads on SEN radio in Melbourne told us they would be challenging for their first A-League title under new coach John Aloisi, but I don't think anyone took that seriously. Not having sold all their young, quick players in the off-season, they offloaded a few during the campaign. Eli Babalj came back from Red Star in a box marked "Return To Sender" and David Williams was inconsistent as ever. Richard Garcia deserved better.

Bottom of the League were Wellington Phoenix. The board demanded sexier football from Ricky Herbert, which he was unable to deliver before standing aside. Grinding out results also fell by the wayside as the Phoenix crashed from making to Finals in 2011-12 to finishing dead last, or dud lust as

the Sky Sport commentary team would say.

The new Finals format means we could have the eventual champions still having lost more games than they won for the season should Perth go all the way. Farical? Maybe. Spiritual hero who appears in you to clear your view when you're too crazy may be required.

The VPL season kicks off this weekend. It would not be possible for me to fully convey my contempt for the FFV unless we could have some sort of fold out centre-spread which allowed me to use a very large font, perhaps up to 200 point, to really ram the message home. Apparently the FFV do not understand why many would like to see the Dockerty Cup name restored for the current Statewide Knock-Out Cup. The names of their Life Members and Hall of Fame members must mean very little to them. Or maybe they are just embarrassed that the old bloke back in the day could run a league of up to four divisions (and a couple of Cup competitions) in his spare time without a staff of seventy and a loss of near enough to a million dollars in a year? No wonder they want to bury Harry's memory!

AGAINST ALL ODDS

A-League Champion 2012/13

West Sydney Wanderers	2.65
Central Coast Mariners	3.15
Melbourne Victory	5.75
Brisbane Roar	7.00
Adelaide United	9.00
Perth Glory	12.0

State One Squad Lists

Altona Magic: Max Tommy (GK), Nenad Kukic (GK), Chris Collins, John Stojceviski, Aleksandar Koltovski (c), Ace Stojceviski, David Straniero, Stevce Dimceviski, Robert Naumoski, Oleksiy Khrapko, Melvin Becket, Denis Ukalovski, Alexander Nikolic, Jason Veljanovski, Michael Kitanovski, Daniel Petrovski, Steven Mladenovski, Darko Mijajlevski, Taye Philip Ajao, Steven Cudrig (vc), Daniel Simonoski
Coach: Pece Stojesci

St Albans Saints: Stjepan Gal, Tristen Romein Anthony Boras, Michael Gragic, Filip Vulic, Karlo Juravic, Goran Jozeljic, Hrvoje Matkovic, Juso Julardzija, Josip Kozic, Joshua Brekalo, James Stefanou, Grgo Saric, Konrad Dobraszkiewicz, Ashley Lymn, Nathan Long, Tomislav Pondeljak, John Sapazovski, Anthony Themistokleous
Coach: Micky Colina

Box Hill United: Alex Pavlidis, Nikola Surdoski, Matt Collier, Chris Irwin, Alex Schroen, Phil Hawkins, Andrew Prokop, Samuel Catherine, Dejan Erakovic, Rini Muriqi, Matt Waters, Mackie Simmons, Kenny Athiu, Petr Tichy, Andrew Goff, Billy Liolios, Joey Calderone, Damien Miskulin, Josh Busch, Josh Benigno, Nick Kokolakis, Josh Valadon, Shaun Peterson, Ari Karanicolas, Chris Marshall
Coach: Arthur Georgiou

Western Suburbs: Chris Maynard, Colin Woods, Fabio Dilizia, Jason Corbett, Sam Sweeny, Simon Kelly, Elias Tsintzas, Dale Thompson, Sach Opacic, Matthew Dimech, Yaw Otuo-Acheampong, Dimi Vitoulkas, Vasilios Sianidis, Michael Groenewald, Daniel Eskander, Frank Catalano, Anthony Ramzy, Andrew Mobblerly, Johnny Scollo, Shayan Missaghi, Drew Ramsey, Chris Andoniadis, Nick Manduca
Coach: Leonardo Catalano

Heidelberg United: Saso Alexovski, Stefan Baricevic, Alvaro Carrillo, Michael Cunningham, Kenta Dohi, Leslie Doumbalis, Yianni Galanos, Daniel Heffernan, Jason Koutsodontis, Nick Marinou, Mark Mc Gough, Kevin Neilson, Takanori Nishimoto, Phil Petrevski, Fidel Richards, Oliver Rowland, Mathew Tansevski, Daniel Vasilevski, Jordan Wilkes, Zane Zole
Coach: George Katsakis

Sunshine George Cross: Robert Santelli (GK), Chris Scerri (GK), Eddie Cetkin, Barry Devlin, Serdar Pir, Trent Waterson, Brodie Paterson, Bozidar Lojanica, Pece Siveski, Nicolas Scerri, Habib Fleifel, Daniel Hannah, Ryan Davidson, Zoran Petrovski, Steve Martin (C), Joseph Franjic, Martin Mintoff, Emanuel Sadik, Adrian Logozzo, Eddie Soares, Ross Thomson
Coach: Tony Ciantar

Moreland Zebras: Alex Stojanovski (GK), Scott Millar, John Crevelli, Ray Lally, Nick Symeoy, Angus Martin, Scott Robson, Simon Tolli, Joel Nikolic, Nelson Salvatore, Abel Fesseha, Josh McMonagle-Ihasz, Mario Piriano, James Papadimitriou, Liam Cannell, Mile Medjedovic, Robert Armellini, Adamo Centofanti, Danilo Bonilla-Ospina, Dianoush Rasoulzadeh (GK)
Coach: Danny Gnadjic

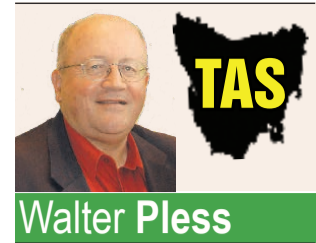


Refsworld

Referee Gear

www.refsworld.com





Rangers and Warriors open up lead at top

Northern Rangers and Olympia Warriors are the only teams with a perfect record after the second round of Tasmania's State-wide Victory League competition. Rangers beat Glenorchy Knights 5-0 away on the new artificial pitch at KGV Park in Glenorchy. It was the Northerners' second 5-0 win in succession and they have yet to concede a goal. English import Shane Brassington gave Rangers the lead on the half-hour with a shot from wide on the right that went in off the inside of the far left-hand post. Derek Schipper made it 2-0 three minutes later when his powerful shot deceived Knights goalkeeper Michael McKenna, who fumbled the ball and saw it cross the line after it ricocheted off his near post. Knights changed tactics in the second half and moved central defender Jayden Hey into midfield in place of Alex Bellini, who was replaced by Ben Robinson, who took up the right-fullback position. The move worked for a while and the Knights began to get more of the play, but they were unable to find the net. They suffered a huge blow in the 75th minute when McKenna injured



South Hobart's Kostas Kanakaris (right) takes on Tilford Zebras' Paul Palmer. Photo by Walter Pless.

a calf and had to be replaced by the young and inexperienced Sam Cornish. Cornish's first task was to pick the ball out of the back of the net in the 78th minute when Nick Lanau-Atkinson scored direct from a corner from the right. The very next minute, Agele Luate was put through and he rounded Cornish in a one-on-one situation and stroked the ball into the net to make it 4-0. Cornish was fortunate in the 86th minute to receive just a yellow card

when he upended Agele Luate and conceded a penalty, which was converted easily by Brassington to take the score to 5-0. In the final minute, the Knights' Aaron Marney rattled the Rangers crossbar with a volley, but that is all the home side had to show for their endeavours. Tilford Zebras' flirtation with last year's New Town Eagles side is proving a failure. With five of the Eagles' line-up from last season in their ranks, they went down to their second successive defeat, this time

2-1 against South Hobart at home at KGV Park. And again, it was the former Eagles strikers from last season that let them down, Adam McKeown and Alex Leszczynski missing glorious chances which might have given Zebras victory. Leszczynski gave Zebras the lead from the penalty spot in the 17th minute after Josh Fielding brought down Aaron Cairns. Fielding played at centre-back in place of the injured Hugh Ludford and he was assigned the task of

TAS Victory League

Northern Division										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	P		
Northern Rangers	2	2	0	0	10	0	6			
Olympia Warriors	2	2	0	0	7	2	6			
South Hobart	2	1	1	0	5	4	4			
Devonport City	2	1	0	1	6	4	3			
Kingborough Lions U 2	1	0	1	5	5	3				
Glenorchy Knights	2	0	1	1	3	8	1			
Tilford Zebras	2	0	0	2	3	7	0			
Launceston City	2	0	0	2	0	9	0			

Victory League Results										
Glenorchy Knights 0 Northern Rangers 5										
Launceston City 0 Kingborough Lions 4										
Olympia 2 Devonport 1										
Tilford Zebras 1 South Hobart 2										

marking Leszczynski, which he did successfully. South Hobart equalised in the 23rd minute when Nick Morton collected a pass from Shae Hickey and then returned the ball to the overlapping Hickey on the left. Hickey skilfully floated the ball inside the far top corner, past a desperately back-peddalling Zebras keeper Rob Kay. Leszczynski should have scored from Cairns's cut-back from the left in the 52nd minute, but he lifted his shot high over the bar. Two minutes later, a poor back pass by South Hobart central defender Lucas Hill allowed McKeown to gain possession and advance unimpeded on goal, but his tame shot was brilliantly saved by the agile Matthew Ferguson, who had read the situation to perfection. In the 61st minute, McKeown provided a perfect left-wing cross for

Leszczynski, but his shot was saved by the impeccable Ferguson. South Hobart hit the front in the 67th minute when Chris Hunt bamboozled the Zebras defence down the right and passed the ball inside to substitute Mizael. The Brazilian's shot was parried by Kay, but only to the feet of Morton, who slotted the ball home. In the 82nd minute, Mizael showed what Brazilians are famous for when he beat three defenders with some great footwork before clipping the bar with a tremendous shot from 20 metres. In the 90th minute, Ricky Self crossed the ball from the left to McKeown, but the Zebras striker was unable to control and the chance went begging. Three minutes into stoppage time, Andrew Clark rattled the South Hobart woodwork with a powerful shot from wide on the right. The ball fell to Cairns, who hooked it over the bar from two metres out, which summed up Zebras' match. Zebras, touted as one of the favourites for the inaugural Victory League title, are second-last with two straight losses. Beneath them are their sister club from Launceston, Launceston City, who were hammered yet again, this time 4-0 by Kingborough Lions United at Mitsubishi Park. Cormac Collins, the former New Town Eagles player, opened the scoring, the other goals coming from captain Marcello Marchioli and Danny Cowen, the latter netting twice. This was an important win for Lions, who have been disappointing in the pre-season and in last weekend's opening round. Olympia Warriors are second on goal-difference after a 2-1 win over the visiting Devonport City at Warrior Park, the goals coming from Emmanuel Tsakiris and Korean import Seung Yong Jin. Brayden Mann netted Devonport's consolation goal.



Peter Simcox Marulanda double keeps Bayswater on top

Bayswater continued their perfect start to the All Flags soccer Premier League with a come from behind 3-2 win against Bunbury at Payne Park on Saturday. Columbian striker Gustavo Giron-Marulanda scored twice from the penalty spot, while former Perth Glory midfielder Todd Howarth added a third. The home side had hit the front midway through the second half with goals from Ryan Francis and player-coach Matt Lock, but Bayswater hit back to take all three points. Coach Chris Coyne was happy with the win despite a below par performance. "It was a disgustingly ugly win, but I'd bite your hand off for it," he said. "They're the ones you want, when you don't play well but you win, then you're happy. I was dis-



Gustavo Giron-Marulanda in action.

appointed with the performance but happy with the result." Stirling Lions are the only other side still undefeated, after a stunning 4-1 win against traditional rivals Floreat at Macedonia Park. "We thoroughly deserved to win and we played some excellent football," Stirling Coach Doug Hesketh said. "They scored a goal just before half-time, but we

started the second half just as well as we did the first and got our rewards. "We have a young but experienced squad, but I really think we are still very much a work in progress." The home side raced to a two-goal lead with Rory Grant converting a penalty and skipper Jason Gavin heading home on the half hour. Floreat skipper Mark Pritchard scored

from the penalty spot just before the break to give his side hope, but second half goals to Phil Arnold and Anthony Lyons gave the Lions a comfortable win, and sets up a top of the table clash next Sunday between the two unbeaten sides at Frank Drago Reserve. In other results Sorrento ended Armadale's good start to the

WA Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	P
1 Stirling Lions	3	3	0	0	10	4	6	9
2 Bayswater City	3	3	0	0	7	4	3	9
3 Sorrento FC	3	2	1	0	11	2	9	7
4 Armadale	3	2	0	1	9	6	3	6
5 Inglewood Utd	3	1	1	1	9	6	3	4
6 Balcatta	3	1	1	1	4	6	-2	4
7 Perth SC	3	1	0	2	5	5	0	3
8 Cockburn City	3	1	0	2	5	6	-1	3
9 ECU Joondalup	3	1	0	2	5	6	-1	3
10 Floreat Athena	3	0	2	1	4	7	-3	2
11 Bunbury F Force	3	0	1	2	4	7	-3	1
12 FW NTC	1	0	0	1	3	7	-4	0

season with a 3-1 win at Alfred Skeet Oval. The home side had the perfect start, scoring in the first minute through Jack Salter, but Gavin Knight levelled for The Gulls before half time. Knight added two more in the second half to complete his hat-trick and move them into third place on the table. Balcatta gave Saul Contera his first win as Coach when they beat Perth SC 2-0 at Dorrien Gardens. Adam Tong's stunning free kick gave them the lead on the hour, before skipper Ashley Rosindale added the second, to take Balcatta over their Italian rivals. Cockburn City secured their first win of the season, downing ECU Joondalup 2-1 at Dalmainac Park. Jack Eades' powerful shot flew past Joondalup keeper Andy Banks before half time and sec-

Football West Results

All Flags State League Premier Division Round 3: Stirling Lions 4 Floreat Athena 1, Bunbury Forum Force 2 Bayswater City 3, Inglewood United 7 Football West Ntc Men 3, Perth 0 Balcatta 2, Armadale 1 Sorrento 3, Cockburn City 2 Ecu Joondalup 1

All Flags State League Premier Division Reserves Round 3: Stirling Lions 1 Floreat Athena 1, Bunbury Forum Force 2 Bayswater City 1, Inglewood United 4 Football West Ntc Men 2, Perth 5 Balcatta 0, Armadale 2 Sorrento 5, Cockburn City 2 Ecu Joondalup 0

All Flags State League Premier Division 18s Round 3: Stirling Lions 5 Floreat Athena 0, Bunbury Forum Force 2 Bayswater City 1, Inglewood United 6 Football West Ntc Men 8, Perth 5 Balcatta 0, Armadale 1 Sorrento 1, Cockburn City 2 Ecu Joondalup 4

ond half substitute John Thornley added a second against his former club. Former Perth Glory midfielder Tommy Amphlett pulled one back for Joondalup, but it was too little too late. In the final game Inglewood United moved into fifth spot on the table, with a 7-3 win against the Football West National Training Centre at the Intiga Stadium with Greg Sharland bagging a hat-trick.







THIS IS FOOTBALL



THIS IS FOOTBALL







THIS IS FOOTBALL

www.thisisfootball.com.au

CLUB KIT SPECIALIST

P: 03 9428 3066

189 Swan Street Richmond Vic 3121. Email: thisisfootball@live.com.au

VICTORIA'S LEADER IN TEAM WEAR

17

Goal! Weekly - Friday 5th April 2013

Couch Potato



* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT



Wednesday 10th April
06:00 am Liverpool TV

Sunday 14th April
03:00 am Liverpool TV



FRIDAY 5TH APRIL
UEFA Europa League Quarter-Final
1st Leg Tottenham v Basel 5:55am **LIVE**
UEFA Europa League Quarter-Final
1st Leg Chelsea v Rubin Kazan 8:00am
1st Airing
UEFA Europa League Quarter-Final 1st
Leg Benfica v Newcastle 9:50am 1st Airing
UEFA Europa League Quarter-Final
1st Leg Fenerbahce v Lazio 11:40am 1st
Airing
UEFA Europa League Quarter-Final 1st
Leg Highlights Show 7:00pm 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 28 Preview Show
8:00pm 1st Airing

SATURDAY 6TH APRIL
Bundesliga Round 28 Hoffenheim v
Fortuna 5:25am **LIVE**
Eredivisie Round 29 Feyenoord v VVV
7:30am 1st Airing
Blue Square Premier Round 43 Cam-
bridge v Newport 9:20am 1st Airing
Scottish Premier League Round 33 In-
verness v St Johnstone 11:10am 1st Airing
Copa Libertadores Matchday 6 High-
lights Show 7:00pm 1st Airing
Scottish Premier League Round 33
Hearts v Ross County 9:55pm **LIVE**

SUNDAY 7TH APRIL
npower Championship Round 41
Watford v Cardiff 2:15am **LIVE**
Bundesliga Round 28 Hamburg v
Freiburg 6:15am 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 28 Dortmund v
Augsburg 8:05am 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 28 Frankfurt v Bayern
Munich 1:35pm 1st Airing
Scottish Division 3 Round 34 Queens
Park v Rangers 8:55pm **LIVE**

MONDAY 8TH APRIL
Bundesliga Round 28 Nuremberg v
Mainz 9:50am 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 28 Hannover v Stut-
tgart 11:40am 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 29 Willem II v PSV
1:30pm 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 29 Ajax v Heracles
3:20pm 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 28 Highlights Show
7:00pm 1st Airing

TUESDAY 9TH APRIL
Championship Highlights Show 7:00pm
1st Airing
Scottish Premier League Round 33
Highlights Show 7:30pm 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 29 Highlights Show
8:00pm 1st Airing

THURSDAY 11TH APRIL
Copa Libertadores Matchday 7 Gremio v
Fluminense 10:50am **LIVE**

FRIDAY 12TH APRIL
UEFA Europa League Quarter-Final 2nd
Leg Rubin Kazan v Chelsea 1:50am **LIVE**
UEFA Europa League Quarter-Final 2nd
Leg Basel v Tottenham 4:55am **LIVE**
UEFA Europa League Quarter-Final 2nd
Leg Newcastle v Benfica 8:00am 1st Airing
UEFA Europa League Quarter-Final
2nd Leg Fenerbahce v Lazio 10:30am
1st Airing
UEFA Europa League Quarter-Final 2nd
Leg Highlights Show 1:00pm 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 29 Preview Show
8:00pm 1st Airing



SBS ONE
Sunday April 7th
4:00 pm FIFA World Cup 2014 Magazine
4:30 pm UEFA Champions League Mag-
azine

Monday April 8th
4:30 pm FIFA Futbol Mundial
11:00 pm The World Game

Wednesday April 10th
5:30 am UEFA Champions League -
Quarter-final

Thursday April 11th
5:30 am UEFA Champions League -
Quarter-final
11:05 pm UEFA Champions League Hour
- All the highlights from the latest round of the
UEFA Champions League

SBS TWO
Wednesday April 10th
8:30 pm UEFA Champions League - A
replay of this morning's Quarter-final (1st Leg)
match.

Thursday April 11th
7:30 pm UEFA Champions League Hour
- All the highlights from the latest round of the
UEFA Champions League

Friday April 12th
7:30 pm UEFA Europa League High-
lights - All the highlights from the latest round of
the UEFA Europa League.



ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE **LIVE**
Times listed are 7 minutes prior to kick-offs.

English Premier League
Sat Apr 6 Reading v Southampton
10.38 pm Fox 1
Sun Apr 7 West Brom v Arsenal
12.53 am Fox 1
Sun Apr 7 Norwich v Swansea
12.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Apr 7 Stoke v Aston Villa
12.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Apr 7 Liverpool v West Ham
10.23 pm Fox 2
Sun Apr 7 Tottenham v Everton
10.58 pm Fox 3
Sun Apr 7 Chelsea v Sunderland
11.53 pm Fox 1
Sun Apr 7 Newcastle v Fulham
1.00 am Fox 3 **
Mon Apr 8 QPR v Wigan
1.03 am Fox 2
Tue Apr 9 Man United v Man City
4.45 am Fox 1

Hyundai A-League
All games **LIVE**
Hyundai A-League Finals - Week 1
Fri Apr 5 Elimination Final No 1
Melbourne Victory v Perth Glory
7.30 pm Fox 2

Sun Apr 7 Elimination Final No 2
Adelaide United v Brisbane Roar
5.00 pm Fox 2

FOX SPORTS FC
Every Tuesday
8.30 pm

Finals Week 1: ASK THE EXPERTS

THE VERDICT

Victory (6) Glory (2) - Adelaide (2) Brisbane (6)

Congratulations to Roger Sleeman for winning the GW Tipping Premiers Plate.

SANTO CILAURO **63**

Victory
Adelaide

Strike Rate
46.66%

Last week: 3

CRAIG MACKENZIE **61**

Perth Glory
Brisbane Roar

Strike Rate
45.19%

Last week: 2

EDDIE KRNEVIC **57**

Perth Glory
Brisbane Roar

Strike Rate
42.22%

Last week: 1

PETER KATHOLOS **58**

Melbourne
Brisbane

Strike Rate
42.96%

Last week: 2

ROGER SLEEMAN **70**

Victory
Brisbane

Strike Rate
51.85%

Last week: 4

ANDY HARPER **54**

Victory
Brisbane

Strike Rate
40.00%

Last week: 1

JOHN DOYLE **61**

Victory
Roar

Strike Rate
45.19%

Last week: 4

KISS OF DEATH **65**

Victory
Adelaide Utd

Strike Rate
48.15%

Last week: 3

NEW COACH, NEW HOPE AT GULLY



VPL COUNTDOWN

BRANDON GALGANO takes an insider's view into the lives of the Victorian Premier League clubs as they prepare for the upcoming 2013 season.

CLUB: Green Gully SC
Position Last Season: 3RD (Lost preliminary final)
VPL Titles: 9
Last Title: 2011
Coach: Dean Hennessey

With the Victorian Premier League kicking off this weekend it seems only fitting that this week's Premier League focus is on the competitions most successful club, Green Gully SC. Having won two of the last three Premier League titles and having made the finals series for the last five seasons on the trot, it would be easy to assume that it will be business as usual for a club who have only seen success over the past five years. New coach, former Southern Stars number one Dean Hennessey, has been busy over the offseason with various changes to the first team squad. In terms of departures, influential midfielder Graham Hockless has moved onto Port Melbourne with Jonathan Munoz also moving on over the break. These major losses to the first team have been countered by a number of key signings made by Gully management.

Former Kiwi interanational Jeff Fleming will be leading the charge under new coach Dean Hennessey this season. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

Who's in??

Tom Cahill: The Former Richmond marksman has the ability to change a game when required and his performances will be central to Gully's hopes of regaining silverware in 2013.

Michael Anderson: The Former North Geelong Warriors striker had a great season in State League one last campaign and will be looking to lead the line alongside Cahill in 2013.

Sean Harding: The Irishman joins on from Ballarat Red Devils and the right back will look to bring some added strength to an already sturdy Gully defence.

Scott Muirhead: Another former Richmond signing, the ex-Ab-erdein and Dunfermline defender player over 100 matches in the first two divisions of Scottish football and his experience will be crucial to Gully's chances in 2013.

Who to watch out for in 2013

The exploits of former Socceroo and Melbourne Victory defender Rodrigo Vargas will certainly be central to Gully's success in 2013 and after picking up the club best and fairest award in 2012 he will no doubt be primed for yet another big season at the club. Young Defender Christopher Dib will certainly be a player to watch

Stevo's Corner



By Steve Scott

Last weekend's surprise sacking of Sunderland manager Martin O'Neill got me thinking about the management merry go round that exists in world football. A sacking culture is quite prevalent in the world game at the moment when it comes to Managers.

To demonstrate how prevalent this sacking culture is entrenched in football, I will examine the sackings that have occurred in the English Football League so far this season.

There are 92 association football teams in the top four tiers of English Football. The Premier League teams consist of 20 clubs at the top of the English Football League system. The remaining 72 clubs are split into three divisions: the Championship, League One and League Two.

At the time of writing this column, 49 managers have left their clubs so far during season 2012-13. That equates to 53.26% of the clubs having changed managers during this season.

Of the 49 managerial changes so far this season, 34 of them have been due to the manager being sacked by the club and the other 15 all resigned from their management positions.

Of those 34 sackings, five of them have been of Premier League clubs. Chelsea, Queens Park Rangers, Reading, Southampton and Sunderland have all sacked their managers this season. This number of changes is quite small when compared to the number of changes in the Championship, which currently sits at 17.

It was two Championship clubs who racked up the first two management sackings for season 2012-13, before a single ball was even kicked. Changes in club ownership at both Watford and Nottingham Forest saw their current managers, Sean Dyché and Steve Cotterill both being shown the door in early July. Both managers have since gone on to secure new management roles at other Championship clubs, where they both remain at the time of writing this article.

It is also another Championship club that has made headlines for its regular changing of managers throughout season 2012-13. Blackburn Rovers opened the season with Steve Kean in charge. After a poor start to the season, and immense pressure coming from the club fans, Kean resigned from his role as Manager in late September.

Since Kean's resignation, both managers that have been appointed have lasted in their roles for very short periods of time before being sacked by the club. Henning Berg was appointed as Manager on the 27th of December 2012 and lasted in the role for just 57 days before being sacked. His replacement, Michael Appleton fared slightly better than Berg, lasting in the role for 67 days before he was sacked by the club also.

To further demonstrate the lack of stability in management in football, of the current 92 English Football League Managers, just six of them have been in their current role for five years or longer. The four current longest serving managers in English Football are all managers of Premier League clubs. Sir Alex Ferguson tops that list having been in charge of Manchester United for over 26 years. The other three long serving Premier League Managers are Arsenal's Arsene Wenger, Everton's David Moyes and Stoke City's Tony Pulis.

In my opinion, this seasons statistics further confirm that the coaching merry go round is alive and well in football. Given the current short sighted attitudes taken by many clubs and their owners, the merry go round doesn't look like slowing down anytime soon.

out for in 2013. The 18 year old placed third in the clubs U21 best and fairest award last season. Possessing size and strength as well as impressive technical ability for a centre half, Dib will be fighting for a starting spot come round one on Saturday against South Melbourne FC.

There will certainly be great expectations on Green Gully this season as the club look to play finals football for the sixth consecu-

tive season. Despite key losses to the first team in Graham Hockless and Jonathan Munoz, Gully have made a number of key signings over the break with coach Dean Hennessey ensuring that the squad is as strong as ever going into the new campaign and after a trophy less season in 2012, the club's first in three years, he will no doubt be looking to win back some silverware in 2013.

DODGEBALL REVOLUTION
The Future of Melbourne Dodgeball

Join The Revolution
First Game Free!

Venues in Bundoora & Greensborough
Mixed and Junior
Competitions Available

www.dodgeballrevolution.com.au

www.facebook.com/DodgeballRevolution @Dodgeball_Rev

NO APOLOGIES
A FOOTBALL DOCO BY ASHLEY MORRISON

Recently voted by FourFourTwo UK as one of the top 5 football documentaries to see before you die! Order your copy today online at:

www.noapologiesrequired.com

VPL embarks on new season

The 2013 Victorian Premier League (VPL) season kicks off this weekend with plenty of excitement expected once again. Dandenong Thunder are current Champions after winning the treble last season under the tutelage of Chris Taylor and will threaten once again this season. While at the other end of the table Heidelberg United and the Moreland Zebras were relegated to State League One. Coming up into the VPL are Pascoe Vale and Port Melbourne as Vitale Ferrante's Pascoe Vale were promoted as State League One Champions five points clear of Eric Vassiliadis' Port Melbourne side.

The 2013 VPL season is going to be yet another exciting season in Victorian football as the Dandenong Thunders, Oakleigh Cannons and Green Gullies push for the Minor Premiership. But there could also be a few surprises with Southern Stars and newly promoted Port Melbourne and Pascoe Vale causing a few problems for the so-called 'bigger' clubs.



BENTLEIGH GREENS

The Greens have recruited superbly over the off-season bringing in Dandenong stars Like Sherbon and Stuart Webster and Southern Stars trio Luke Fitzpatrick, Liam McCormick and David Stirton. Meanwhile coach John Anastasiadis has kept Melbourne Heart youngster Evan Batsis and Young Socceroos Luke O'Dea with the experienced Wayne Wallace and Aron Wilford ensuring Bentleigh have a squad ready to compete for the title.

But have Bentleigh made too many changes to their squad? It'll take time for the squad to gel, so Anastasiadis will hope his squad find their grown quickly in such a competitive league.

BENTLEIGH GREENS 2013 SQUAD:

Jamie De Abreu, Jonathan De Biase, Luke Fitzpatrick, Liam McCormick, David Stirton, Wayne Wallace, Jack Webster, Andy Brennan, Milos Ridesic, Stuart Webster, Luke Sherbon, Luke Pilkington, Aron Wilford, Dominic D'Angelo, Stephen Hatzikostas, Alastair Bray, Kristopher Kioussis, Evan Batsis, Max Ertherige, Danny Kelly, Luke O'Dea, David Chick. Coach: John Anastasiadis



DANDENONG THUNDER

VPL Champions Dandenong Thunder will start their defense of their title on negative three points, after FFA deducted three points for crowd behavior problems at last season's VPL Grand Final and will also play their first five home games behind closed doors.

The Thunder lost 2012 Goalkeeper of the Year Stuart Webster and 2012 Golden Boot winner Luke Sherbon both to Bentleigh, but coach Chris Taylor didn't waste time in strengthening the side with Steven Topalovic,



Klimet Taseski (Richmond)

Zac Walker, Afghan defender Safa Fasiel and Heart youngster Nick Epifano all joining in the off-season. With a squad probably as strong as last season the Thunder will certainly be title defenders and could well defend their crown. On a sourer note, midfield dynamo Mathew Theodore will miss the start with hip and groin problems.

DANDENONG THUNDER 2013 SQUAD:

Luke Hopper, Zaim Zeneli, Shane Rexhepi, Iqbal Jawadi, Nate Foster, Alon Blumgart, Duncan Short, Liam Kearney, Joao Makiadi, Brendan Elmazovski, Steven Topalovic, Bryan Bran, Sphetim Mala, Feston Azizi, Fernando Perez Martin, Andrew Mullett, Zac Walker, Craig Elvin, Sean McIlroy, Mathew Theodore, Veton Korcari, Afrim Avdulai, Safa Fasiel, James Robinson, Nick Epifano. Coach: Chris Taylor



GREEN GULLY

There's been plenty of change at Green Gully with Dean Hennessey taking over from club

legend Ian Dobson and the ex-Stars coach has made some interesting changes.

With a strong squad and Gully's knack of performing well the Cavs' should be able to comfortably make the finals, but how will Gully perform under Hennessey? Only time will tell.

With a strong squad and Gully's knack of performing well the Cavs' should be able to comfortably make the finals, but how will Gully perform under Hennessey? Only time will tell.

GREEN GULLY 2013 SQUAD:

Michael Anderson, Hamid Basma, Mitchell Bissinger, Liam Brian, Tom Cahill, Dean Campelj, Muhamad Chawk, Christopher Dib, Stephen Downes, Brent Fisher, Jeffrey Fleming, Kieran Gonzalez, Sean Harding, Jason Hayne, Daniel Jones, Scott Muirhead, Michael O'Farrell, Osagie Ederaro, Mathew Sanders, Andy Vargas, Rodrigo Vargas, Brian Vanega. Coach: Dean Hennessey



HUME CITY

Hume were disappointed with last season's finish



Osagie Ederaro (Green Gully)

of ninth despite doing well in the early half of the season and coach Lou Acevski has made several changes to his squad so City can seal a top six birth this time round. 2012 Gold Medalist Nick Hegarty, Atilla Ofli, Chris Oldfield and experienced defensive duo Izzy Erdogan and Steven Pace were retained, but Phillip Riccobene and Howard Fondyke departed. Former Perth Glory fullback Naum Sekulovski scraped under the transfer radar and should spur Hume on and with other additions, Alan Mulcahy, DeeJay Firth, Kiwi Dakota Lucas, Englishman Sean Canham and Heart's Ersin Kaya adding to an already strong squad.

Hume City 2013 SQUAD: Chris Oldfield, Martin John, Evan Van Der Byl, Sean Finn, Izzy Erdogan, Jarryd Barnes, Steven Pace, Sam Dehaini, Naum Sekulovski, Craig Sives, Albert Zoranello, Ersin Kaya, Shaun Romein, Alan Mulcahy, DeeJay Firth, Cem Cil, Josh Knight, Jack Turner, Atilla Ofli, Nick Hegarty, Dakota Lucas, Ryan Baldaccino, Ernie Simsek, Sean Canham, Turhan Sumbul. Coach: Louie Acevski



MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

In their 60th year the Melbourne Knights will be hoping to challenge for a finals spot after missing out last season and that could be a good possibility under Andrew Marth.

The crust of the squad was kept from last season including captain Adam Zilic, Ryan Filipovic, Tomislav Uskok, Marijan Cvitkovic and the Colosimo brothers. But the Knights couldn't keep hold of top goalscorer Jake Nakic and brother Adam who both moved onto Port Melbourne.

Chris May comes in from Heidelberg between the sticks with English midfielder Thomas Fraser and former Dinamo Zagreb academy player Josip Konyit to add quality to yet another young Knights side

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 2013 SQUAD:

Christopher May, Bobby Vidanoski, Ryan Filipovic, Adam Zilic, David Kustura, Tomislav Uskok, Thomas Fraser, Craig Sweeney, Jacob Colosimo, Marijan Cvitkovic, Anthony Colosimo, Joseph Konyit, Hassan Daramy, Ben Surey, Antonio Ivanisevic, Djibril Diallo, Christopher Talajic, Brandon Zezovski,



Tyson Holmes (Sth Melb FC)

Shayan Alinejad, Matthew Hravost, Abu Konteh, Joshua Berrios, Sam Torrens. Coach: Andrew Marth



NORTHCOTE CITY

2012 Semi Finalists Northcote City have been one of the quieter sides in the transfer market, but have done well to keep significant players from last season which saw the club finish in fifth and a finals spot should certainly be the minimum requirement. But coach Goran Lozanovski has brought in Frazer Siddall from Southern Stars to bolster his goalkeeping stocks. Centre-backs Kristian Konstantinidis and skipper Adriano Chiappetta need to continue their form from last season with Milos Lujic and James Kalifatidis responsible for bagging the goals.

Northcote City 2013 SQUAD: Frazer Siddall, Adriano Chiappetta, Tremayne Sadler, Kristian Konstantinidis, Nick Tzoulis, Bonel Obradovic, Jonathan Voulgaris, James Kalifatidis, Milos Lujic, Alex Rojas, Dean Piemonte, Hayden D'Agostino, Michael Catalano, Wade Dekker, Michael Eagar, Ricardo Gonzales, Chris Di Bartolo, Ilker Kuyucu, Evan Kounavelis, Nick Terezakis, Chris Theodoridis, Rashid Mahazi, Kris Oghanna. Coach: Goran Lozanovski



OAKLEIGH CANNONS

2012 Grand Final Runner-ups Oakleigh Cannons will hope to go one further this season, but this time coach Bill Theodoropoulos will have to do it all on his own as his 2012 co-coach Peter Zois didn't return to the Cannons for 2013.

The Cannons have kept the majority of their squad last season which saw the club finish second in the league and finals, but have added former Perth Glory youngster Reece Vittiglia, Werribee's Simon Zappia, Bulleen's Dusan Bosnjak and ex-Roar and Phoenix 'keeper Griffin McMaster. With one of the strongest squads, Oakleigh are one of the favourites and should finish in the top two or three, and just maybe 2013 will be their year.

OAKLEIGH CANNONS 2013 SQUAD: Ari Drakos, Jamie Cumming, Casper Andersen, Steven Gray, Frankie Lagana, Luke Walker, Hayden Doyle, Evan Christodoulou, Ricky Diaco, Jesse Krncevic, Goran Zoric, Recce Vittiglia, Simon Zappia, Chris Frangou, Stelios Konstantinidis, Dusan Bosnjak, Ian Kamau, Jamie De Smit, Griffin McMaster, Alex Connell, Andrea Stoilovic, Evan Kraloglou. Coach: Bill Theodoropoulos



PASCOE VALE

State League One Champions Pascoe Vale enter their inaugural VPL season with Vitale Ferrante in charge and former Adelaide United and Wellington assistant Luciano Trani by his side. Andrew Le Page, Marco Santilli, Gregory Lombardo, Michael Ferrante, Liam Flynn and Mark Lepre were all keys for Pascoe Vale in achieving promotion and with the addition of Tomislav Milardovic from Richmond, Daniel Chaabani and Hernan Espindola from Melbourne Victory and Will Abbott from Melbourne Heart, the new boys might cause a stir.

PASCOE VALE 2013 SQUAD: Andrew Le Page, Marco Santilli, Jake Vandermeij, Bale Micovski, Daniel Chaabani, Rosario Mancuso, Codey Larkin, Gregory Lombardo, Hernan Espindola, Matthew Lazarides, Mark Pistininzi, Stefaan Sardelic, Frank Serratore, Liam Flynn, Tomislav Milardovic, Joseph Youseff, Mark Lepre, Davey van 't Schip, Evan Karavitis, Adrian Talarico, George Mcheileh, Rylan Sadler, Cody Sellwood, William Abbott, Michael Ferrante. Coach: Vitale Ferrante



PORT MELBOURNE

Port Melbourne return to the VPL for the first time in a decade and have splashed the cash to, not only ensure survival, but also to shock a few and push for finals. Chris Grossman, Graham Hockless, the Riccobene and Nakic brothers, Kamal Ibrahim, Kristian Sarkies, Ross Honos and Daniel Visevic are just a few signings the 2012 State Knockout Runner-ups have brought in. And with the outstanding Eric Vassiliadis in charge the Sharks could cause a real upset.

PORT MELBOURNE 2013 SQUAD:

Adam Hrehoresin, Aaron Romein, Denny Martin, Peter Roberts, Martin Mason, Tim Paton, Felix Rosman, Chris Grossman, Amadu Koroma, Paul Miller, Luke Bowen, Graham Hockless, Nick Kalombokis, Phillip Riccobene, Kamal Ibrahim, Luka Prevlovic, Kristian Sarkies, James Riccobene, Daniel Visevic, Tony Ouliaris, Adam Nakic, Darryl Roach, John Lazaridis, Damien Peters, Ross Honos, Jake Nakic, Michael James. Coach: Eric Vassiliadis



RICHMOND SC

Richmond go into the season under the guidance of French-Mauritian Jean-Marc Imbert after the departure of Michael Chatzitritifonos and many key players

VPL Round One

Green Gully Cavaliers v Sth Melbourne
KO 3:00 PM / Sat 6 Apr
Green Gully Reserve

Southern Stars v Dandenong Thunder
KO 6:00 PM / Sat 6 Apr
Kingston Heath Soccer Complex

Northcote City v Oakleigh Cannons
KO 3:00 PM / Sun 7 Apr
John Cain Memorial Park

Melbourne Knights v Pascoe Vale
KO 3:00 PM / Sun 7 Apr
Knights Stadium

Bentleigh Greens v Richmond FC
KO 5:00 PM / Sun 7 Apr
Kingston Heath Soccer Complex

Port Melbourne Sharks v Hume City
KO 6:30 PM / Sun 7 Apr
JL Murphy Reserve - SS Anderson Oval

like Daniel Visevic, Tom Milardovic and Stjepan Gal. The Eagles however, were able to hold onto key duo Erhan Karahan and Hamlet Armenian. But Imbert has recruited well with the likes of former Melbourne Heart midfielder Klimet Taseski, Melbourne Victory defender Petar Franjic and Chilean Samuel Valdevieso joining the Eagles. With a blend of quality youngsters and experience campaigners Richmond should be happy with a finals spot and certainly will be in the mix come September.

RICHMOND SC 2013 SQUAD: Rani Dowisha, Oscar Vonk, Erhan Karahan, Ben Osei-Safo, Haris Vrbovac, Giddie Sweet, Petar Franjic, Sam Sheppard, Tim Purcell, Klimet Taseski, Mate Eterovic, Didier Imbert, Ari Ritz, Nicholas Krousoratis, Peter Sawan, Josh Kweifio-Okai, Hamlet Armenian, Josh Groenewald, Samuel Valdevieso, Damir Lovkancic, Enes Sivic. Coach: Jean-Marc Imbert



SOUTH MELBOURNE

South under Peter Tsolakis didn't have the best of seasons in 2012 with an inconsistent campaign finishing just outside the six and will hope to at least push for a finals spot in 2013. With quality recruits like Tyson Holmes and Rhys Meredith from the Queensland State League, Alan Kearney from Southern Stars and Dutch striker Renco Van Eeken adding to an already strong squad, a finals spot is definitely achievable.

SOUTH MELBOURNE 2013 SQUAD: Peter Gavalas, Tom Matthews, Rhodri Payne, Philip Petreski, Dimitri Tsiaras, Joe Keenan, Fernando De Moraes, Trent Rixon, Tyson Holmes, Bradley Norton, Rhys Meredith, Luke Byles, Andy Vlahos, Dimitri Hatzimouratis, Alan Kearney, Carl Recchia, Andrew Cartanos, Sebastian Mattei, James Karvelis, Matko Budimir, Renco Van Eeken. Coach: Peter Tsolakis



SOUTHERN STARS

Since Dean Hennessey moved onto Green Gully, the Stars appointed ex-Richmond Assistant and Preston

Lions player Zaya Younan. The majority of last season's squad has departed onto greener adventures with the likes of Alan Kearney, Alan Mulcahy, Luke Fitzpatrick and David Stirton moving on, as Younan deals taking a control of a younger squad. Key recruit and captain Ramazan Tavsanoglu is the oldest in the squad at 28, while Andrew Viola and Devon Bonne join from Richmond and Heidelberg respectively. With the inexperienced Younan in charge the Stars can't expect to challenge for the title, but with a couple outstanding youngsters like Tom Lino and Josh Wood with the likes of Tavsanoglu leading the side the Stars could be a dark-horse for a finals spot.

SOUTHERN STARS 2013 SQUAD: Kerim Koc, Ramazan Tavsanoglu, Halil Gur, Joshua Bowen, Joshua Wood, Andrew Viola, Luke Burgess, Sait Guler, David Obaze, Vincent Bontemps, Tom Lino, Marvin Hamilton, Devon Bonne, Nicholas McKay, Ali Hameed, Ali Turgut, Rudvan Saglam, Dogan Dagli, James Walker, Ryan Herval, Deang Aguek, Jason Ricciuti. Coach: Zaya Younan.



Can Dandenong Thunder put their off-season troubles aside to successfully defend their VPL title in 2013? Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

Jim Milisavljevic: Socceroo keeper, referee and striker extraordinaire

Blast From The Past



By Roy Hay

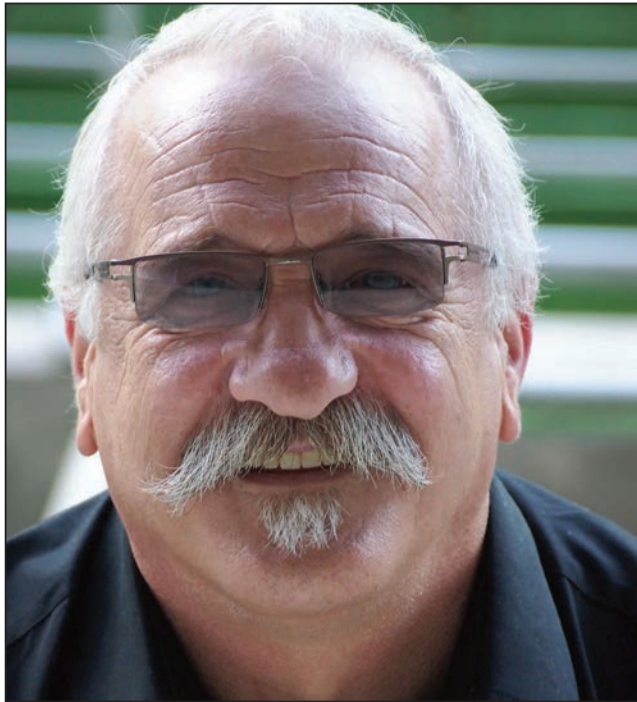
Which Australian goal-keeper won an Ampol Cup final playing as a substitute striker? That should have even the experts scratching their heads.

The answer is Dragoljub 'Jim' Milisavljevic who began his senior career with JUST on his 17th birthday on 15 April 1968 against Hakoah at the St Kilda Cricket Ground.

The Cup winning goal came in 1975 towards the end of his time with JUST when the club met South Melbourne Hellas at the Olympic Park. Milan Cvijic was in goal for JUST and playing a blinder, while Jim was warming the bench. The match remained goal-less into extra-time.

Coach Cedo Cirkovic told the surprised Milisavljevic to get stripped. 'I must be needed in case it goes to penalties,' thought Jim. But no! Cirkovic told him to swap shirts with one of the outfield reserves and take the field in place of striker Slobodan (Danny) Zoraja. He had only been on the park for about five minutes when a long ball forward came in his direction. Hellas keeper John Kennedy was off his line to narrow the angle but Milisavljevic slipped it under him and into the net in the 105th minute to win the game one-nil, the last time JUST won the Ampol Cup.

Jim Milisavljevic was born in Melbourne on 15 April 1951 just a year after his parents arrived from Yugoslavia. He went to Princes Hill Primary School in Carlton where he played Australian Rules. Friends introduced him to soccer, which he then played in the afternoons following footy in the morning at weekends. He was offered a place with Carlton Under-19s but he had represented Victoria at the various junior age levels at soccer and went on to captain the state under-21 side, so he turned down the footy career which beckoned. As a junior he played all over the park but one night at training with JUST coach Aleksandar Jagodic the youngster was asked to fill in as keeper. The rest followed almost as if ordained, for Milisavljevic reasoned that his outfield skills did not match those of



Jim Milisavljevic today at a Melbourne Heart game. Photo: Roy Hay.



Jim Milsavljevic tangles with Tommy McColl but the ball eluded both and finished in the net. Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library.



Jim Milisavljevic makes sure he has the ball under control on the ground. Photo: Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library.

Tommy Stankovic, Frank Micic, Cedo Cirkovic and Verko Mladenovic, so it was better to hold down a position as keeper.

When he joined JUST and became the regular keeper he had Rale Rasic as a coach for a while and helped the club to win three state league championships between 1969 and 1973. He had some outfield experience during that time, as when he injured his wrist he played at centre-half marking the likes of Ulysses Kokkinos of Alexander and Graham French of Hellas.

Rasic remembered Milisavljevic and called him up for the

Socceroos who went to Germany in 1974. Although Jack Reilly got the nod for the World Cup matches, Milisavljevic kept him and Alan Maher honest with his skill and competitiveness. Today Milisavljevic points out that on 13 November 2013 it will be forty years since Jimmy MacKay struck the goal that took the Socceroos to the World Cup for the first time. As to the experience in Germany it was all a bit of a blur for the Australian part-timers who found themselves taking on the superstars of world soccer like Gerd Müller and Franz Beckenbauer. He did some interviews for the Yugoslav press and after the tour-

nament he had a letter from Hamburg inviting him to go for a trial, but unfortunately that came at the time when he had a serious hand injury and he was unable to take the chance.

When he finished with JUST in the mid-1970s he joined Carlton Serbia in the Provisional League where he played and coached the club over a period of around 10 years. He then took up refereeing where his experience of playing enabled him to cope with even the wild men of the game at the time. He tells how he dealt with one character who was known for pushing the boundaries. Encountering him in the centre-circle before



Jim Milisavljevic receives another medal from George Wallace of the VSF. Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library.

kick off he pulled a yellow card half-way out of his pocket and told the recalcitrant, 'You are already booked, so if you step out of line it is a red and you are off?' 'You can't do this, ref', the man responded. 'I've just done it,' said Jim. The player was so taken aback that he behaved and played so well he got three votes as the man of the match. Who says psychology has no place in football?

When his playing career was over Jim Milisavljevic served as a delegate to the Victorian Soccer Federation, then on the State League Management Committee and as a Commissioner for two years. He still attends A-League games and wishes he was playing today given the relative incomes of current stars compared with what he and his colleagues collected for playing the game.

MELBOURNE SPORTS BOOKS

Mon-Fri: 9.30am-5pm Sat: 10am-12noon

51 Brunswick Road, East Brunswick, VIC 3057

Phone:- (03) 9662 1085

www.melbournesportsbooks.com.au

Email:- info@melbournesportsbooks.com.au

Contact:- Santo 0421 793 833

Have you discovered Mr Cleansheets yet?

If not, you're missing out on the greatest rollicking football romp since Bert Trautmann put his neck on the line for Man City in the 1956 Cup Final.

Vicious hooligans, Irish mafia, nymphomaniac pop stars and shedloads of football.

Get your hard copy at any bookstore or buy online at www.mrcleansheets.com (ebook also available).



Vélez Sarsfield and Atlético Mineiro hot favourites



**Latin
Wrap**

By Francis Fields

Argentina's Vélez Sarsfield booked a berth in the Copa Libertadores round of 16 with a 3-1 away win over Chile's Deportes Iquique.

Vélez Sarsfield consolidated their Group Four lead after defender Sebastián Domínguez opened the scoring early in the 7th minute, before Lucas Romero doubled the lead after 19 minutes with a shot from distance.

Iquique reduced the deficit through Manuel Villalobos in the 39th minute, but Colombian forward Jonathan Copete made it 3-1 for the Argentine side five minutes after the interval.

Vélez keeper Sebastian Sosa also saved a Rodrigo Díaz penalty during the first half to ensure this side's progression.

Romero told Fox Sports it was "a very hard match". He added: "We knew it was a must-win game for us in order to get the qualification so we are very happy with this result. We are relaxed in the Copa Libertadores ahead of the last group game because we are already qualified. Now, it is time to focus on the local league."

Ecuador's Emelec went up to second in the group on nine points, three behind Vélez, thanks to a 2-0 home win over Uruguayan giants Peñarol, who remain third on six.

With only nine minutes to go, Argentine defender Cristian Nasuti headed a free-kick into the back of the net, while Fernando Gaibor extended the lead with a goal from a free-kick in injury time. Emelec need a draw against Vélez Sarsfield in their next game to progress.

Peñarol, meanwhile, take on already-eliminated Deportes Iquique in Montevideo and will keep an eye on Emelec's result as it effects their qualification hopes.

Colombian side Deportes Tolima did not feel the effects of altitude as they beat Peruvian team Real Garcilaso 3-0 at 3300 metres above sea level.

Paraguayan forward Rogerio Leichtweis netted a hat-trick, scoring in the 54th, 66th and 84th minutes to put his side second in Group Six. Only goal average places Tolima above Real Garcilaso, with both sides even on seven points.

Colombian side Santa Fe lead Group Six after beating Paraguayan giants Cerro Porteño 1-0 in Bogotá to reach the eight point mark.

Jefferson Cuero gave Santa Fe the win after 23 minutes as he



Atlético Mineiro are this year's strongest Brazilian side in the Libertadores

chedged down a Yulian Anchico cross into the back of the net. With 15 minutes remaining, Santa Fe defender Carlos Valdés and Cerro Porteño midfielder Fidencio Oviedo were both shown a red card.

Following the defeat Cerro Porteño have no chance of making it into the next round.

Brazilian giants Palmeiras saw off Argentina's Tigre 2-0 at home to climb up to second in the Group Two standings.

Caio opened the scoring after 20 minutes, after being set up by Vinicius, and Charles added a second early in the second half.

Palmeiras have collected six points so far, two less than Paraguayan side Libertad and one more than Peru's Sporting Cristal. Tigre lie bottom of the group on three points.

The friendly will raise funds for the family of Kevin Spada, the 14-year old who was killed by a flare during a Copa Libertadores match between San Jose of Bolivia and Brazil's Corinthians in February.

Scolari selected a home-based squad, with overseas players unavailable for either side, giving a number of youngsters and fringe players their chance to impress. Gremio defender Andre Santos, who is on loan from Arsenal, and Leandro Damiao gained selection for the "Selecao", although Fluminense striker Fred was a surprise omission after scoring three goals in his last three internationals.

Scolari will use the friendly as a chance to test out a number of players from Brazil's Under-20 team - including Palmeiras forward Leandro, Náutico defender Douglas Santos, Corinthians goalkeeper Matheus Vidotto and Botafogo defender Doria - ahead of the Confederations Cup in July.

Ronaldinho, Neymar and Alexandre Pato have been named in the Brazil squad for Saturday's friendly against Bolivia, with Luiz Felipe Scolari combining a mixture of youth and experience ahead of the exhibition match.

Atlético Mineiro on the rise
Atlético Mineiro have been undoubtedly the best team in the 2013 Copa Libertadores so far, winning tough games in Argentina against fellow Brazilian team São Paulo as well as in the altitude of La Paz. But their success is not an accident and did not start this year. In fact, they won the state league and finished in second place in the Brasileirão last year, paving the way for their recent results in Libertadores.

The revolution started when Alexandre Kalil assumed the presidency in 2008. Kalil used his first term as the club's boss to organise the finances, despite the club's huge debts. The Minas Gerais-born businessman is famous for posting new signings and important announcements on his Twitter page, making him a very modern president in that regard. It did not take long before better players became more attracted by a move to Galo, such as high rated defender Réver, who shone for Grêmio but failed to adapt to German football.

Other quality players joined Atlético Mineiro, such as Victor, one of Brazil's best goalkeepers, and striker João, who struggled at Internacional and during spells at Manchester City and Everton, but fitted perfectly into Atlético Mineiro's system. The main signing however was Ronaldinho Gaúcho, who came in 2012 after a poor spell at Flamengo. He quickly lived up to the hype and became one of the team's

leaders, becoming a key player in Atlético Mineiro's successful campaign the Brasileirão. He also managed to stay away from some of the off the field problems he had at Flamengo.

Diego Tardelli was the last big name to join the team, arriving shortly before Libertadores. He had previously played for Atlético Mineiro but then moved to Russia and the Middle East. His versatility is useful as he can play as both a striker and in the wing. Bernard, the team's other main star, however, was not signed from any team, and came instead from Atlético Mineiro's world famous youth academy.

The 20-year old winger is very complete, having great technique and speed, and being capable of both creating chances for his teammates as well as finishing chances himself. He has already been linked to foreign football, but Atlético Mineiro decided to keep him for the Copa Libertadores.

The squad also includes other good players like centre back Leonardo Silva, right-back Marcos Rocha and defensive midfielder Pierre. Former Wolfsburg defensive midfielder Josué also joined the team and is expected to play in the knockout rounds of the Copa Libertadores. His experience can be useful as he was part of the São Paulo team that won the competition, as well as the Club World Cup, in 2005.

Tevez gets community service order

Manchester City striker Carlos Tevez has been sentenced to 250 hours of community service after pleading guilty to a pair of driving offences.

The Argentine has also been handed another six month disqualification from driving and a



Federico Insúa has been instrumental in midfield for Vélez Sarsfield

fine of 1000 pounds after being caught driving while disqualified and without insurance.

Magistrate Elizabeth Depares ruled that the 29-year-old 'had served a significant proportion of his disqualification' when he was stopped by police, and as such a community penalty was preferable to a custodial sentence.

Tevez's lawyer Gwyn Lewis stated that 'the whole episode ... has been completely alien to (Tevez) and very frightening. He has full understanding of the seriousness of this.'

Tevez entered a guilty plea after being stopped by police outside of Mottram Hall Hotel and Golf Club in Cheshire on March 7 following an anonymous tip-off.

When stopped, Tevez told the officer: "I only live down the road. Two minutes."

CONCACAF Champions League: Seattle Sounders 0 Santos Laguna 1

American Herculez Gomez was on target as Santos Laguna downed Seattle Sounders 1-0 in their CONCACAF Champions League semi-final first leg.

Gomez fired home a rebound on 54 minutes as the visitors claimed a vital away goal and the ascendancy ahead of the return leg in Mexico.

Santos were almost caught out moments before when Oswaldo Sanchez was forced to parry away Oswaldo Alonso's long-range strike, but the Liga MX side quickly broke to open the scoring.

Carlos Quintero lead the counterattack and saw his shot blocked by Marcus Hahnemann only for Gomez to slot home the rebound.

Santos will return home for the second leg next Tuesday.

Ronaldo: Neymar too good for Brazil

Brazil legend Ronaldo has urged compatriot Neymar to consider a move to one of Europe's elite clubs.

The 21-year-old, currently with Santos, is one of the most sought-after talents in world football and has reportedly courted the interest of Bayern Munich and Barcelona - the latter of which are believed to be leading the hunt for the striker's signature.

But so far Neymar has opted to remain in his homeland and is determined to do so until after the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Ronaldo, however, believes Neymar needs to consider a move if he is to fulfil his potential, saying he has too much potential to remain in South America.

"Neymar is undoubtedly an excellent player. He is going to be one of the best in the world when he decides to play in Europe. He is too talented to be limited only to Brazil," he said in an interview with Sports Spectacular.

"He has had several proposals from clubs abroad, but he renewed his contract with Santos. Ideally the best time to leave for Europe would be before the World Cup in 2014.

"It would make him more mature and he would have more experience to lead Brazil."



WANT TO PLAY SOCCER IN THE USA?

NSR Soccer Australia scout, evaluate & promote Australian players to 2500+ USA Colleges.

NSR
soccer australia

Register for a trial in your region, to find out more visit www.nsrsocceraustralia.com

London Calling



By Samuel Collins

Caffè Americano in one hand, a mini notepad in the other, Roberto Martínez strolled along in downtown Miami. It had been eleven days since the Balaguer-born tactician had steered Wigan Athletic to Premier League safety for yet another season. But despite the 85° heat, and some of the States' most stunning beaches, the Spaniard wasn't here on a vacation. He wasn't alone, either.

On Martínez's left was John W Henry, the Liverpool owner. And Aston Villa's Randy Lerner might as well have been on his right. The Americans were equally desperate to lure the Latics coach. Henry even met Martínez back in London five days later, too. The 63-year old Anfield businessman was "an impressive man", as Martínez would later acknowledge, but a move to Merseyside wouldn't materialise. Neither would a move to Birmingham.

Wigan's outspoken chairman, Dave Whelan, insisted Liverpool's failure to secure a deal was due

Martínez plots another great escape



Robert Martinez is on the verge of doing another EPL Houdini with Wigan Athletic.

to the "grave reservations" Martínez had about working under a director of football. Villa would suffer the ignominy of a second rejection from Martínez in twelve months; "They're not big enough" Whelan suggested. Late into May, Whelan and Martínez would meet in Jersey, and after over a fortnight of talks across the globe, it was all over. "Roberto is staying at Wigan," a delirious Whelan would confirm, "We're just so pleased."

Many seemed surprised. Despite Martínez's reasons, Wigan aren't Villa, and Liverpool are one of Europe's most prestigious teams, regardless of their recent struggles. "He'll go to one of the biggest clubs if he does go," a defamed Whelan would tell the media, clearly addressing a cheap shot at Liverpool.

Fast forward the best part of a year, and on the pitch, little has changed. Last season Liverpool finished 8th, now they sit 7th. Vil-

la finished 16th, now they sit 18th. Wigan finished 15th, now they're 17th. Though, with six weeks of the campaign remaining, it's the team from the DW stadium who are the ones to watch. Again.

A 4-1 loss at Chelsea in early February meant Wigan had won just once in their last thirteen league games. Their fate seemed sealed. Relegation, surely? This was the year they went down. Written off by TV pundits, radio hosts, everyone. At times it even felt like

some wanted them to play in the Championship next season. Three days after that defeat at Stamford Bridge, a national paper ran a blog explaining why Wigan "will go down".

They ought to have known better.

Three league victories in their past four, as well as cup wins at Huddersfield and Everton, and Martínez is again working his magic. Out of the relegation zone and into the club's first ever FA cup semi-final, Wigan are over-achieving, like they have done ever since promotion back in 2005. On Saturday, Arouna Koné's late strike - his tenth league goal - was enough to see off Norwich City. And they did so without allowing the Canaries a single shot on target. A notable feat for any side in the division, but it astounds more when it's managed by a team which cost just £14.2m to conjure up. Four of the starting eleven, for what was Wigan's first win over Norwich in their history, cost nothing. Goalkeeper Joel and fans favourite Paul Scharner are both on loan, while centre-back Antolin Alcaraz and midfielder Callum McManaman both joined on frees. The most expensive, Jean Beausejour, a £4m addition from Birmingham City last summer, has been a revelation.

And though most in the Premier League boast a truly international brigade, few outdo Wigan. On the weekend, the side aiming for a ninth successive campaign in the

top-flight, fielded ten different nationalities. Barbados, Honduras, Ivory Coast, Austria and Chile are all represented in this Wigan team. The multi-national line-up may explain why the club never seem to find form until the latter stages of each season. Potential language barriers and adjustment to life in the North seem like a sound guess. But regardless of their background, Wigan's players all know their duties. "We've got 12 or 13 nationalities in our dressing room," says Omani goalkeeper Ali Al-Habsi, "but all the players feel a responsibility to Wigan."

With their next four games away and the club only out of the bottom three on goal difference, Wigan's future is far from secure. The cup tie with Millwall at Wembley is sandwiched in between trips to Queens Park Rangers and Manchester City, while there are also games with Spurs and Arsenal to contend with yet.

Last season, seven wins in their final eleven league games kept them up, but this season is tougher. "This is the closest fight to avoid relegation that we've had in a long, long time," Martínez claims.

With only four points separating Villa, in eighteenth place, with Southampton, in twelfth place, it promises to be a remarkable battle to stay in the Premier League over the next six weeks.

With Martínez at the helm, Wigan will be confident of another great escape.



By Alex Milic

Serbia
Criticism and a lack of support from fans and under pressure from the media after a poor start to Serbia's World Cup qualifying campaign, the Balkan country's coach Sinisa Mihajlovic appears set to step down in October.

Mihajlovic vowed to qualify for next year's finals in Brazil when he took over last May but having collected only seven points from the opening six games in Group A, nine less than leaders Belgium and Croatia, the 44-year old acknowledged Serbia had only a theoretical chance of advancing.

"Mathematically we are still in the hunt and no matter what happens we want to win every game until the end of the qualifiers, but if we fail I will step down as I promised when I took over," the former international defender told daily Vecernje Novosti.

"Perhaps I put the bar too high and it would have been much easier to go along with the football federation's (FSS) objective of merely injecting fresh blood into the team for the future.

"I am glad they have full confidence in my project of building a team capable of doing well but the fans and the media don't seem to be on the same page and I also miss daily work in a club because sitting at home for two months between games is not



No faith in Mihajlovic

my cup of tea," he said.

Mihajlovic won the European Cup with Red Star Belgrade in 1991 before he moved to Italy's Serie A, where he played for Roma, Sampdoria, Lazio and Inter Milan and then coached Bologna, Catania and Fiorentina.

He made a reasonably good start in the qualifiers with a 0-0 draw at Scotland and a 6-1 home drubbing of Wales but three successive defeats, 3-0 at home to Belgium, 1-0 in Macedonia and 2-0 at bitter Balkan rivals Croatia derailed Serbia's campaign. Last week's 2-0 home win against Scotland did little to lift the gloom or boost Serbia's hopes of reaching next year's tournament after Belgium beat Macedonia 1-0 and Croatia won

2-1 in Wales to effectively whittle the group down to a two-team race.

Heavily criticised for making wholesale changes to the team for every match, Mihajlovic defended his decision by stressing that Serbia did not have enough depth in the squad.

"The back four and (striker) Filip Djuricic are the only automatic starters because we don't really have adequate cover for them but all the other spots in the first eleven are up for grabs," he said.

"I will sit down and talk to the FSS when my contract expires in October and I must thank them for providing the perfect facilities and working conditions, but as things stand it is unlikely I will change

my mind and carry on if we don't qualify."

Macedonia
UEFA President Michel Platini has visited the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), where he witnessed the country's developing football infrastructure in person and held talks with government and football leaders.

On his arrival in the capital Skopje on Friday, Mr Platini was welcomed by the president of the Football Federation of Macedonia (FFM), Ilcho Gjorgjoski, general secretary Dimitar Zisovski and national

teams' sporting director Petar Miloshevski.

The UEFA President was present at the ceremony marking the official opening of the FFM's House of Football and national training centre, built within three years with financial support which included funding from UEFA's HatTrick assistance programme. The FYROM government also contributed to the project through financial aid and provided the free location for the base.

The first such football complex in the country is located alongside the river Vardar in Skopje's Aerodrom municipality and consists of two administrative buildings, one 3,000-seater mini-stadium, eight dressing rooms and three grass pitches, two of which are artificial surfaces. The training centre will house all of FYROM's national teams, from youth to senior level.

The ceremony was attended by the FYROM Prime Minister, Nikola Gruevski, representatives of the city of Skopje, senior UEFA officials, veterans of FYROM football and other dignitaries. During the proceedings, a grassroots event was held involving 100 children aged between eight and ten, who enjoyed the opportunity to shake hands and have their photographs taken with Mr Platini. Addressing the ceremony, the UEFA President said: "I am very happy to be here again. I was here a few years ago when the construction of the project started and I am especially glad to see a wonderful House of Football and an amazing football centre."

The FFM president thanked UEFA and Mr Platini for their contribution to the work, emphasising that "it would have been impossible to build such a complex without UEFA's assistance". Mr Gjorgjoski also announced that the next project

planned by the FFM in collaboration with UEFA through its HatTrick scheme is the construction of ten artificial pitches across the country "which will greatly enhance the training conditions for all football generations".

Mr Platini underlined the intention of UEFA and its member associations to protect the game from racism, doping, violence and match-fixing. "If you attend a match when you know the result beforehand, the thrill is lost," said the UEFA President. "We have the best sports available and we should all unite in order to protect it from such negative phenomena."

Mr Platini's second official visit to the Balkan country continued with talks with Nikola Gruevski at the Prime Minister's office. Both parties agreed that "aiming young people towards sport should remain one of the priorities in society, as this is the best way to prevent modern risks and to build healthy values and competitive spirit within the young population". Mr Platini greeted the FYROM government's investments as "a great example of support for sport by politicians".

Mr Platini, along with other senior UEFA officials, then joined FFM senior staff for an official meal and detailed discussions on further cooperation between European football's governing body and the association. To conclude his visit, Mr Platini attended the FIFA World Cup qualifying match between FYROM and Belgium at the National Arena, Filip II Macedonian.

The 32,580-seater stadium has been developed into a modern sports venue following reconstruction work two years ago, with UEFA having given significant financial aid for the project.

GENOVA
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF SOCCER

1300 793 505

International Player Pathway

GISS academies provide players the chance to realise their dreams; live the life of a professional European footballer; and live and breath football at the highest level possible.

LIVE THE DREAM

www.issgenova.com

as roma
Tours To Italy



EPL

Wrap

By Andrew Bishara

Di Canio's return brings controversy

Hours after the 1-0 loss to Manchester United, Martin O'Neill was sacked as boss of Sunderland. It's the first time that the successful O'Neill has been fired in his career. The man who led Leicester City to League Cups victories and dominated the Scottish Premier League with Celtic, was told by the board that he was no longer needed at the club.

Defeat at home to United left Sunderland one point above the relegation zone. They had gone eight games without a win, sliding from mid-table to a deadly relegation battle now.

Many point to his inability to change his methods and approach. His tactics of playing the counter attacking game didn't work at Sunderland as he didn't have the players for it. Also known as man who could inspire his team, Sunderland looked lost and lacked confidence.

Of course, that not where all the drama starts: the club have just announced their replacement for O'Neill. His name: Paolo Di Canio.

The controversial player, who lit up the Premier League over a decade ago, has now returned as the boss. His previous role, he was the manager of Swindon Town – and he guided them to promotion in League One. Yet, his arrival hasn't been met with the greatest applause.

Di Canio has openly admitted he's a fascist, a stern supporter of Benito Mussolini. During several of



New Black Cats boss Paolo Di Canio hopes to reproduce his Swindon sucess

his games for Italian side Lazio, Di Canio made fascist salutes to their right-wing fans, a gesture adopted by Italian fascists.

His arrival at Sunderland has sparked a tweetsphere of comment and opinion, amongst Sunderland and football fans. Does it matter if he is open fascist or not? Will it affect the players or the sponsorship of the club?

One man who seems to think it's a problem is David Miliband, the former foreign secretary and Sunderland board member. He stepped down after Di Canio was announced as boss, citing his "past political statements" as a problem.

His reaction might be a bit extreme, but it's understandable that someone with opinions that have sparked controversy before might be harmful to the club. Nevertheless, Miliband's departure hasn't stop the arrival of Di Canio.

In his first press conference, he took a leaf out of the Mourinho notebook, labeling himself the "Unique One", citing similarities between himself and Portuguese tactician. "We are all different but it's obvious that some traits of our characters are similar," said Di Canio. "Many, many people said he was arrogant.

José has a very high belief in himself but that is all and perhaps I am similar. I believe in my knowledge and myself. I am confident I can deliver the best job for this club."

In his first press conference, he took a leaf out of the Mourinho notebook, labeling himself the "Unique One", citing similarities between himself and Portuguese tactician.

"It is obvious that I'm not trying to imitate him because I'm Paolo Di Canio. I am only at the beginning of my career and I will do things in my own way" said Di Canio.

However, the focus couldn't switch away from his political views, with journalists pushing him on answers. The new Sunderland boss answered in pure Di Canio fashion, by saying the situation "is ridiculous and pathetic".

It doesn't look like the issue though will go away anytime soon. Di Canio was always known as a man littered

ENGLAND EPL



Last5games
Most recent first

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	
1 Manchester United	30	25	2	3	70	31	+39	77	WWWWW
2 Manchester City	30	18	8	4	55	26	+29	62	WLWWL
3 Tottenham Hotspur	31	17	6	8	53	38	+15	57	WLLWW
4 Chelsea	30	16	7	7	59	32	+27	55	LWWLW
5 Arsenal	30	15	8	7	59	33	+26	53	WWLWW
6 Everton	30	13	12	5	47	35	+12	51	WWWLL
7 Liverpool	31	13	9	9	59	40	+19	48	WLWWW
8 West Bromwich ...	31	13	5	13	41	41	+0	44	LDWLW
9 Swansea City	31	10	10	11	41	40	+1	40	LLWL
10 Fulham	30	10	9	11	43	46	-3	39	WWDWD
11 West Ham United	30	10	6	14	35	44	-9	36	WLWLL
12 Southampton	31	8	10	13	44	53	-9	34	WWDLL
13 Stoke City	31	7	13	11	27	36	-9	34	LDLLL
14 Norwich City	31	7	13	11	28	47	-19	34	LDLWL
15 Newcastle United	31	9	6	16	41	56	-15	33	LLWLW
16 Sunderland	31	7	10	14	33	43	-10	31	LDLWL
17 Wigan Athletic	30	8	6	16	36	56	-20	30	WWLWL
18 Aston Villa	31	7	9	15	32	58	-26	30	LLWLL
19 Queens Park Ra...	31	4	11	16	28	51	-23	23	LLWWL
20 Reading	31	5	8	18	36	61	-25	23	LLLLL

with controversial moments. It's already his first day on the job and he's created a storm.

EPL Preview.
After last year's exciting and thrilling finish to the season, this year, sadly it's a bit of a let-down with Manchester United strolling to the title. With the Premier League title race being a cakewalk, fans are to turning to something else for excitement. And you can look no further than the chase for the top four.

The top two is all but sorted. United have locked in first, as have Manchester City locked in second. The battle rages for third and fourth: third, an automatic entry into the Champions League; the fourth a play-off round.

Andre Villas-Boas' Tottenham have the edge over their rivals, leading Chelsea by two points and their infamous rivals, Arsenal by four. Both of the chasing pack though has a game in hand. Win those, and only two points will be separating those three teams.

Spurs look impressive, especially considering the fantastic form of Gareth Bale. But relying on him is a cause for concern. If he has an

off day or gets injured, they look lost without him. More so, Spurs lack squad depth compared to their rivals. And with Villas-Boas side going deep in the Europa League – his boys might end up getting tired or burnt out, playing every three days.

Then there is the fixture list. Spurs have the toughest run-in of all the teams, facing the likes of Manchester City, Everton and Chelsea.

Chelsea are in the same boat – they face Liverpool, Manchester United and Everton. But they also have to contend with the FA Cup and Europa League as well. For the Blues, and their resources they should already be well clear of the pack, but with the club completely divided against itself (fans hating the manager, the manager hating the club's treatment of him, and the players again hating the manager) Chelsea look a team that after one or two bad results, could mean the end of the world.

Talent wise they should be up there, but if they can't sort out their internal issues, they could find themselves missing out again on the Champions League, after finishing sixth last season.

Then there is Arsenal. And Arsenal are well, just Arsenal. I read an ar-

Latest Results	Next Match
Sunderland 0 - 1 Man Utd	Reading v Southampton
Arsenal 4 - 1 Reading	Norwich City v Swansea City
Mann City 4 - 0 Newcastle Utd	Stoke City v Aston Villa
Southampton 2 - 1 Chelsea	WBA v Arsenal
Swansea City 1 - 2 Tottenham	Liverpool v West Ham Utd
West Ham United 3 - 1 WBA	Tottenham v Everton
Wigan Ath 1 - 0 Norwich City	Chelsea v Sunderland
Everton 1 - 0 Stoke City	Newcastle Utd v Fulham
Aston Villa 1 - 2 Liverpool	QPR v Wigan Athletic
Fulham 3 - 2 QPR	Man Utd v Man City

One To Watch This Weekend...
Will Wigan continue their fantastic escape from the drop? They take on QPR at Lotus Road, who sadly, look dead and buried for a stint in the Championship.

Michael Owen And What Could Have Been

London Eye





By Robert Davis

The piece of news that I awoke to on a normal Tuesday morning hit home harder than it should have. No, no, it's not the hilarious 'you can't write this' story that is currently unfolding at Blackburn Rovers, it was the news that a childhood hero of mine and many others was finally calling it a day, hanging up his boots and leaving the game of professional football at the age of 33.

Michael Owen is commonly ridiculed these days. Abuse on the pitch, the butt of jokes on Twitter, the nicknames 'benchwarmer' and 'sick note' are commonly thrown around with just the mention of his name. What a new generation of football fan won't remember though is just how good Owen was and how much he was looked up to in the media and by his fellow professionals.

Owen's career sadly started to nose dive during his spell at Newcastle United due to persistent hamstring and knee injuries. That spell started in 2005, coming up to eight years ago, leaving a huge period of time where many would only see him as an injury prone has-been.

Bursting onto the scene at Liverpool where he came through the prestigious youth academy at the club, he scored on his debut against Wimbledon at Selhurst Park on the penultimate game of the 1996-1997 Premier League season. The following two seasons in the Premier League, he won the Golden Boot two seasons running and replaced Robbie Fowler as the Kop's first choice striker.

During that period also came the



Michael Owen burst onto the world scene at France '98 and promised so much.

little matter of the France '98 World Cup Finals and the one single moment where the 18-year-old England striker scored THAT goal against arch-rivals Argentina in the knock-out stages of the tournament.

Very rarely does a moment in football happen where collectively, all fans can ask the question 'where were you when...'. Owen's superb first touch and electric pace to out-run José Chamot was a thing of pure natural footballing beauty as he shrugs of the former Lazio defender and reaches the edge of the area with only one more defender standing between him and the goalkeeper.

An onrushing Paul Scholes is completely free in the area next to him. All that was needed was any kind of half decent pass for him to slot the

ball into the net, instead, the kid who looks like he's borrowed his shirt from his older brother shifts his body to the left before knocking the ball to the right, leaving a confused Roberto Ayala only able to turn and see the name Owen and the number 20 placing the ball in the top corner of the net. Cue mass celebrations.

Owen was one of those players that put country before club. England was the main priority, something that may contribute as to why he was never held up in the same light at Liverpool the way that Fowler or Ian Rush was. Moving to Manchester United later in your career doesn't help that either.

His dedication to the national team was apparent when he rushed back from a serious injury to play in the 2006 World Cup, only to suffer another

career damaging injury. This time to his knee during a group match against Sweden, leaving him on the sidelines for more than a year.

The best moments of Owen's career came in an England shirt. The hat-trick scored during the 5-1 demolition of Germany in Munich provides another 'where where you when...' moment. The World Cup qualifier coincided with him winning the Ballon d'Or in the same year, the last English player to win the coveted award.

To put that achievement into perspective, the past four winners of the trophy are Lionel Messi, Lionel Messi, Lionel Messi and Lionel Messi. To put that achievement into even more of a perspective, the players plying their trade at the time of Owen winning the trophy include Zinedine Zidane, Raúl, Pavel Nedved, Luis Figo

and a Ronaldo, who at the time was playing arguably the best football of his career at Inter Milan.

A surprise transfer to Real Madrid came in the summer of 2004 for Owen, a move that is wrongly seen as a failure due to just the one season he managed in Spain. It was far from it.

The then 25-year-old started slowly, but eventually won over the notoriously hard to please Bernabéu crowd. He was competing at a time when player power was in full motion at Madrid and Raúl and Ronaldo had their hands firmly gripped on the starting two striking positions, regardless of poor performances.

Owen was forced to make an impact from the bench and with persistent impressive performances and goal scoring exploits, he eventually managed a starting run in the team. This resulted in him starring in a 4-2 win against Barcelona, scoring two well taken goals, automatically forcing himself into Real folklore. Two names were frequently sung by the Bernabéu home crowd that season: Raúl's and Owen's.

The Englishman's record during his one season in La Liga speaks for itself. 18 goals in 15 starts for Los Blancos, the best goals to minutes played ratio in the league.

This is the part where the story for us Michael Owen fans begins to sour. A return to Liverpool was on the cards and reportedly, the move that Owen favoured. Freddy Shepherd's ambitious Newcastle team offered Madrid double the amount of money that Owen's boyhood club had put on the table. A move to the North of England was unavoidable.

After an injury ravaged four seasons with the Magpies, the now 29-year-old was given a lifeline by Alex Ferguson in Manchester.

Persistent injuries continued at United, yet Owen still managed to force himself into another part of club football folklore by scoring a last minute goal in the Manchester derby during the 2009-2010 Premier League season.

In the sixth minute of injury time,

with the game poised at 3-3, Owen's movement to find space on the last shoulder of the defender belongs in a textbook as the ball drops to Ryan Giggs. The Manchester City defence is playing a criminally deep line and the pinpoint ball from the Welshman lands directly at Owen's feet. If his movement belongs in a textbook, then his first touch and finish belong in a museum. Cue wild celebrations from the red half of Manchester.

The goal was scored in typical Owen fashion, but was sadly his last true moment in the game that would send shivers down your spine.

So as Owen's career comes to an end, I, like every other fan is left to wonder what a player we might have had if horrendous luck with injuries hadn't scuppered what was going to be an amazing career.

Would he have broken the England goalscoring record? Without a doubt. Would he and Rooney have forged a world beating striker partnership? I'd like to have thought so. Could England have won a major tournament? Well, maybe not.

OWEN FACT FILE		
FACT FILE		
Full name: Michael James Owen		
Date of birth: 14 December 1979		
Age: 33		
Place of birth: Chester, England		
Height: 1.73 m (5 ft 8 in)		
Position: Striker		
Senior career		
Years Team	Apps (Gls)	
1996–2004 Liverpool	216	(118)
2004–2005 Real Madrid	36	(13)
2005–2009 Newcastle Utd	71	(26)
2009–2012 Man Utd	31	(5)
2012–2013 Stoke City	6	(1)
National team		
England U15	8	(12)
England U16	11	(15)
England U16	14	(10)
1997 England U20	4	(3)
1997 England U21	1	(1)
2006–2007 England B	2	(0)
1998–2008 England	89	(40)



Wrap
Italia

By Luca Cetta

Matri seals stirring
Derby d'Italia win

Juventus prepared for their Champions League quarter final with a fine victory at Inter, while Napoli won a thriller versus Torino. There were contrasting fortunes at the bottom as Palermo shocked Roma, but Genoa and Siena could not be separated.

As Rodrigo Palacio finished off his chance in the 89th minute, the Juventus Stadium was stunned. The Argentine's goal made the score 3-1 to Inter, ending Juve's incredible 49-game unbeaten streak. That was November 4th. Inter trailed by just a point following that victory. As they prepared to meet on Easter Saturday, they trailed by a mammoth 18. The Nerazzurri had won just five games since to see their season goal alter from the Scudetto to Champions League qualification. With the match approaching, Juve's players had one word on their mind – revenge. It was a defeat which still burned they said. It certainly was a shock given Juve had won nine of their ten matches to that point. But months later they enjoyed a nine point lead at the top of the table and were preparing for 'nine cup finals'. They could see the Scudetto on the horizon.

Antonio Conte promised to select a strong side despite the Bayern



Alessandro Matri scores the winner in Juve's 2-1 win over Inter

Munich clash just days away. He was true to his word, with Giorgio Chiellini returning from injury to start. Mirko Vucinic stayed in Turin, ill. Inter switched to a three-man defence and had Ricky Alvarez starting in place of Fredy Guarin, who arrived late from international duty with Colombia.

Last November Juve scored after 18 seconds. Here it took two and a half minutes, with Fabio Quagliarella unleashing a vicious shot that gave Samir Handanovic no chance. Gianluigi Buffon produced a fine save from Palacio, as the same player burst through the Bianconeri defence to equalise nine minutes after the break. On the hour mark, Quagliarella crossed for Alessandro Matri, who converted his near-post effort. There was an unsavoury moment at full-time, with Esteban Cambiasso's horrific, potential leg-breaking challenge on Sebastian Giovinco rightly punished by a straight red card. Incredibly, he was banned for

just one match.

"It was an important win and we played at a high tempo right from the start," said Matri. "We earned three precious points for the standings and can now focus on Bayern."

Torino and Napoli were involved in an eight-goal thriller. Former Torino midfielder Blerim Dzemaili opened the scoring before Paulo Barreto's equaliser. Marek Hamelik missed a penalty, but Dzemaili scored again. Quickfire goals from Jonathas and Riccardo Meggiorini had Toro ahead with ten minutes remaining, but Dzemaili then astonishingly completed his hat-trick. Edinson Cavani netted a brace - including a free kick - in the final five minutes to seal a breathtaking 5-3 Napoli victory.

At the other end of the table, Genoa and Siena were involved in a key relegation battle. A deflected Marco Borriello goal had the hosts ahead, but Innocent Emeghara equalised before the break. Ales-

ITALY

Serie A



	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Juventus	30	21	5	4	59	19	+40	68	W W W D W
2 Napoli	30	17	8	5	55	29	+26	59	W W L D D
3 Milan	30	17	6	7	53	32	+21	57	W W W W D
4 Fiorentina	30	15	6	9	54	37	+17	51	L W W W L
5 Internazionale	30	15	5	10	47	39	+8	50	W L L W D
6 Lazio	30	15	5	10	39	36	+3	50	W L L L W
7 Roma	30	14	5	11	60	51	+9	47	L W D W W
8 Catania	30	13	6	11	40	38	+2	45	L W L L W
9 Udinese	30	10	12	8	38	38	+0	42	D L D W D
10 Parma	30	10	8	12	39	39	+0	38	W L W L L
11 Cagliari	30	10	8	12	37	49	-12	38	W D W L W
12 Sampdoria	30	10	7	13	35	35	+0	36	D L L W W
13 Bologna	30	10	6	14	39	38	+1	36	D L W W W
14 Torino	30	8	12	10	37	41	-4	35	L W L D L
15 Chievo	30	10	5	15	31	45	-14	35	L W W L L
16 Atalanta	30	10	6	14	30	42	-12	34	D L W W L
17 Genoa	30	6	9	15	31	47	-16	27	D L L D D
18 Siena	30	8	8	14	31	42	-11	26	D W W L L
19 Palermo	30	4	12	14	25	43	-18	24	W L L D D
20 Pescara	30	6	3	21	21	61	-40	21	L L L L L

sandro Rosina's penalty temporarily lifted Siena out of the relegation zone, but Bosko Jankovic netted an important equaliser. Genoa remain a point ahead of the Tuscans.

Palermo won their first match since November, upsetting Roma 2-0. Josip Ilicic opened the scoring early. President Maurizio Zamparini noted during the week it wouldn't matter if Fabrizio Miccoli returned from injury as he has not produced his best this season. The President was – not for the first time – forced to eat his words when Miccoli netted the second. Meanwhile, Pescara are rooted to the foot of the table as they lost 3-0 at Parma, with Amauri scoring a brilliant overhead goal.

Elsewhere, Milan kept up pressure on Napoli with a 1-0 win over Chievo on a waterlogged surface. Cagliari defeated European contenders Fiorentina 2-1, while Lazio ended their barren streak to come from behind and beat Catania 2-1. There will scoreless draws between Atalanta and Sampdoria, plus Udi-

nese and Bologna, as Antonio Di Natale saw a penalty saved.

Looking ahead: Derby time in Rome

Lazio's difficult schedule does not abate. Following their mid-week Europa League quarter final with Fenerbahce, they take on city rivals Roma in the Derby della Capitale. Vladimir Petkovic's side ended a three-match losing streak – or extended to a run of just one win in nine – against Catania, but had to do it the hard way in a battling performance.

Champions League football is still an ambition for Lazio, yet Roma boss Aurelio Andreazzoli has ruled his side out of the top three running. Currently 10 points behind Milan, the Giallorossi will look at the Europa League as a more realistic target as they prepare to meet their hated rivals. Fiorentina spectacularly defeated Milan earlier this campaign at the San Siro, but since then the Ros-

soneri have lost just once in 18 matches. The Viola are fourth and trail Milan by six points, so must win to stay in Champions League contention. They will have to do so without injured striker Stevan Jovetic.

Napoli and Genoa have differing agendas on their mind. The Partenopei are attempting to fend off the fast-finishing Milan, while Genoa are just a point and position above the relegation zone, but without a win in five matches.

Elsewhere, Juventus will have the opportunity to rest players after their first leg defeat in Munich when they host Pescara. Chiellini and Andrea Barzagli are suspended anyway. Bologna and Torino will look to assure their Serie A survival, as Catania aim to keep in the European race versus Cagliari. Inter are looking to bounce back against Atalanta, as Palermo seek to continue their revival at Sampdoria. Siena are also looking to save themselves as they face Parma, while finally, Udinese hosts Chievo.



Viva
Espana

By Pepe Lopez

Advantage
Barcelona, but...

FC Barcelona have managed to obtain a result in their away leg in the UEFA Champions League Quarter Final against Paris St Germain. As a bonus, a high scoring 2-2 draw, means that Paris will have to win at Camp Nou in Spain or score at least twice to advance past FC Barcelona to advance to the UEFA Champions League Semi Finals.

The 2-2 draw, which was just seconds away from being a 2-1 win to Barcelona, has come at a high price. Star player, Argentine forward Leo Messi sustained a hamstring problem and is no doubtful for the return leg at Camp Nou, next week. FC Barca issued this Twitter statement; "Messi sustained an injury to his right hamstring. He will undergo further tests on Wednesday to determine the extent of the injury."

Further to this, FC Barcelona, who have already lost the experienced defender Carles Puyol to injury, will have to go without first choice central defender Javier Mascherano due to immediate suspension for accumulated yellow cards, but worst still Mascherano has been diagnosed with a serious knee injury that could



Messi leaves the PSG in his wake

see Mascherano sidelined for upto and beyond 6 weeks.

Paris St Germain raised many eyebrows prior to the kick-off when it was announced that 37 year old glamour signing David Beckham would line up in the heart of Paris' midfield and go head to head with the likes of Xavi Hernandez and Andres Iniesta. Though Paris lost the possession game 32% to 68%, David Beckham was not disgraced, he lasted 70 out of 90 minutes and his quality of corner kicks was second to none.

Paris St Germain Coach Carlo Ancelotti was upbeat with the result and had these comments in the post-match press conference; "I thought the beginning of the match was really good. It was not just defensive play. We played really well the first 30 minutes. After Messi scored it was really difficult but we showed good character and a good attitude on the pitch. I put David in because he

has ability to play forward passes and change the play. In the first 30 minutes it was key for us to show good football. We played really well with good passes - because he was on the pitch."

Assistant Coach Jordi Roura, who welcomed back senior coach Tito Vilanova to the bench in Paris, after months away with cancer treatment, wasn't in the same mood as Carlo Ancelotti;

"We're a bit sad with the result seeing how the match played out, we had the game won despite the adversities. We're going to approach the return leg like we always do, we have to try to score to make the match more difficult for them; they feel the weight of the stadium and of our fans. We will go out to win the match."

Aware of the current injury mini-crisis within Barcelona's ranks, Xavi Hernandez attempted to play down concerns;

SPAIN

La Liga



Last5games
Most recent first

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	
1 Barcelona	29	24	3	2	90	33	+57	75	DWWLW
2 Real Madrid	29	19	5	5	72	28	+44	62	DWWWWW
3 Atlético Madrid	29	19	4	6	51	25	+26	61	DWLWD
4 Real Sociedad	29	13	9	7	51	37	+14	48	DWWDD
5 Málaga	29	13	8	8	41	28	+13	47	WLDDL
6 Valencia	29	13	7	9	42	41	+1	46	DWLDD
7 Real Betis	29	13	5	11	39	42	-3	44	DLWDW
8 Getafe	29	12	7	10	38	44	-6	43	DWDWW
9 Rayo Vallecano	29	13	2	14	38	49	-11	41	LWLDD
10 Levante	29	11	7	11	34	41	-7	40	WDDDL
11 Sevilla	29	11	5	13	43	41	+2	38	LWLWL
12 Espanyol	29	9	9	11	35	39	-4	36	DWLDL
13 Athletic Club	29	10	5	14	33	51	-18	35	WLWWL
14 Real Valladolid	29	9	8	12	37	41	-4	35	LDDW
15 Osasuna	29	8	7	14	26	33	-7	31	WLLWL
16 Granada	29	7	7	15	26	40	-14	28	LDLDD
17 Real Zaragoza	29	7	6	16	26	43	-17	27	DLLDL
18 Celta de Vigo	29	6	6	17	29	43	-14	24	DLLWL
19 Mallorca	29	6	6	17	32	58	-26	24	LLWWL
20 Deportivo La C...	29	5	8	16	35	61	-26	23	WWLDD

"The injuries our team suffered are a bad outcome to the game but we have players good enough to cover those losses."

Mourinho singles out Real defence

Jose Mourinho has praised Real Madrid's defence after they cruised to a 3-0 win over Galatasaray on Wednesday.

Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema and Gonzalo Higuain scored in the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final to put Real in complete control going into the second leg in Istanbul, but Mourinho reserved praise for his team's defensive efforts.

"I think we defended better than we attacked," he told Sky Sports after the match.

"In attacking terms, we lost the last ball, the last pass. We had easy transitions, three against three, three against four, so we could have scored

more goals.

"But I think from a defensive point of view, we had a very good analysis of the situation and the team played very well."

Mourinho then suggested that the Spanish media had played down the strength of their opponents in the build-up to the encounter.

"We played seriously. The Spanish press were not quite so respectful to Galatasaray, but we were respectful to them," he said.

"We know that they are a great team with good strikers who are dangerous on every attack and we prepared very well from a defensive point of view.

"I know that if we score a goal (in Istanbul), they have to score five. The result is very good, but in football, I have seen so many incredible things that nothing can surprise me and Istanbul is a difficult place to play. They have players with a lot of experience, great character, great personality."

Latest Results	Next Match
Rayo Vallecano 1 - 3 Málaga	Granada v Real Betis
Celta Vigo 2 - 2 Barcelona	Real Sociedad v Málaga
R Zaragoza 1 - 1 R Madrid	Real Madrid v Levante
Levante 1 - 0 Sevilla	Deportivo v Real Zaragoza
R Valladolid 1 - 3 Osasuna	Barcelona v Mallorca
Mallorca 2 - 3 Deportivo	Celta Vigo v Rayo Vallecano
Espanyol 2 - 2 R Sociedad	Osasuna v Espanyol
Atl Madrid 1 - 1 Valencia	Getafe v Atlético Madrid
Athletic Club 1 - 0 Granada	Valencia v Real Valladolid
Real Betis 0 - 0 Getafe	Sevilla v Athletic Club

One To Watch This Weekend...

All eyes will be on Barcelona this weekend as they must rest their injured players ahead of their UEFA Champions League Quarter Final 2nd Leg. They host relegation threatened Mallorca on Sunday AET time, who have every reason to take the match to Barca and potentially re-open the Spanish La Liga title race.

Sergio Ramos picked up a cheap yellow card for kicking the ball away in the closing minutes, ruling him out of the return leg but ensuring he is free to take part in the semi-finals, but Mourinho dismissed the idea that the booking was part of his plans.

When asked if the yellow card was helpful to his side, he said: "Not much, because I lost Xabi Alonso and I was going to play Pepe in midfield in Istanbul, but when Sergio got a yellow card he left me with a problem to resolve."

The former Chelsea boss also revealed he spoke with Didier Drogba and Wesley Sneijder after the match.

"I was with him (Drogba) at the end of the match, and with Wesley. They are family. They weren't during the 90 minutes, but they are family," he added.

WORLD OF SOCCER

THE ONE STOP SHOP FOR ALL YOUR SOCCER NEEDS

World of Soccer - Dandenong
Shop 4/119 Lonsdale Street
Tel: 9794 5860

FREE POSTAGE ANYWHERE
IN AUSTRALIA

www.worldofsocca.com.au

CROATIA

1.HNL



Last5games
Most recent first


	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	
1 Dinamo Zagreb	25	17	4	4	54	18	+36	55	W D D W W
2 Hajduk Split	25	12	7	6	37	21	+16	43	W D L W L
3 Lokomotiva	25	12	7	6	42	31	+11	43	D W W L W
4 Rijeka	25	12	7	6	35	30	+5	43	W W W D D
5 Split	25	12	5	8	38	28	+10	41	W D W D L
6 Slaven Koprivnica	25	9	6	10	31	37	-6	33	L D L L D
7 Istra 1961	25	7	9	9	26	26	+0	30	W D W D D
8 Osijek	25	6	12	7	21	24	-3	30	L D D D D
9 Zadar	25	6	6	13	25	48	-23	24	L D L W L
10 Cibalia	25	6	5	14	20	35	-15	23	L L W L D
11 Inter Zaprešić	25	4	10	11	27	34	-7	22	D D L L D
12 Zagreb	25	6	4	15	23	47	-24	22	L L L W W

GERMANY Bundesliga



	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Bayern München	27	23	3	1	78	13	+65	72	W W W W W
2 Borussia Dortmund	27	15	7	5	62	32	+30	52	W W L W D
3 Bayer Leverkusen	27	14	6	7	50	35	+15	48	W L L W D
4 Schalke 04	27	12	6	9	46	43	+3	42	W L W W W
5 Eintracht Fran...	27	12	6	9	42	39	+3	42	W L D L D
6 Mainz 05	27	10	9	8	34	30	+4	39	D D W D D
7 Freiburg	27	10	9	8	35	33	+2	39	W L L D D
8 Borussia M'gla...	27	9	11	7	35	37	-2	38	L W D W D
9 Hamburger SV	27	11	5	11	32	43	-11	38	L L W D L
10 Hannover 96	27	11	4	12	49	46	+3	37	W L D L W
11 Nürnberg	27	8	11	8	31	34	-3	35	D W W D D
12 Wolfsburg	27	8	8	11	32	42	-10	32	D D W L D
13 Stuttgart	27	9	5	13	29	46	-17	32	L W L L D
14 Werder Bremen	27	8	7	12	43	52	-9	31	D D D L L
15 Fortuna Düsseldorf	27	7	8	12	33	40	-7	29	L D L D L
16 Augsburg	27	5	9	13	23	40	-17	24	L W L W W
17 Hoffenheim	27	5	5	17	30	52	-22	20	L D W L L
18 Greuther Fürth	27	2	9	16	18	45	-27	15	L D L D D

THE CHAMPIONSHIP



Last5games

Most recent first

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	
1 Cardiff City	39	24	6	9	64	40	+24	78	W L W D D
2 Hull City	40	22	5	13	56	46	+10	71	L W L W L
3 Watford	40	21	7	12	76	51	+25	70	W D L L W
4 Crystal Palace	40	18	11	11	67	54	+13	65	L L L D W
5 Nottingham Forest	40	16	14	10	59	51	+8	62	D D W W W
6 Brighton & Hov...	40	15	16	9	56	40	+16	61	D D W L L
7 Leicester City	40	17	8	15	59	37	+22	59	L L L L D
8 Bolton Wanderers	40	15	12	13	58	53	+5	57	W L L W W
9 Middlesbrough	40	17	4	19	57	61	-4	55	D L L L L
10 Derby County	40	14	12	14	59	55	+4	54	W W W L D
11 Birmingham City	40	13	13	14	56	62	-6	52	L W W W D
12 Leeds United	40	14	10	16	50	59	-9	52	L L L D D
13 Burnley	40	13	12	15	54	55	-1	51	D D D L D
14 Charlton Athletic	40	13	12	15	49	54	-5	51	D W L W D
15 Millwall	38	14	9	15	47	52	-5	51	D W W L L
16 Blackpool	40	12	14	14	55	53	+2	50	W D L W D
17 Ipswich Town	40	13	11	16	39	55	-16	50	D W W D L
18 Wolverhampton ...	40	13	9	18	51	58	-7	48	W W W L W
19 Blackburn Rovers	39	11	14	14	46	52	-6	47	L D D L L
20 Barnsley	39	13	8	18	50	60	-10	47	W L W W D
21 Sheffield Wedn...	39	13	8	18	44	54	-10	47	D W L W L
22 Huddersfield Town	40	12	11	17	40	66	-26	47	L L W L W
23 Peterborough U...	40	13	7	20	57	65	-8	46	D W W D D
24 Bristol City	40	11	7	22	55	71	-16	40	D L L W D

Greece

Super League



	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Olympiakos Piraeus	27	22	4	1	57	14	+43	70	D W W W W
2 PAOK	27	15	8	4	41	19	+22	53	D W W W W
3 Asteras Tripolis	27	16	5	6	38	18	+20	53	L W W W W
4 Atromitos	27	10	12	5	23	19	+4	42	D L L W D
5 PAS Giannina	27	10	8	9	25	22	+3	38	L W W L D
6 Xanthi	27	9	8	10	24	23	+1	35	D W L W L
7 Panathinaikos	27	9	10	8	28	27	+1	35	L L W W W
8 Panionios	27	11	1	15	31	37	-6	34	W L W L W
9 Platania	27	9	6	12	27	33	-6	33	W W L L W
10 OFI	27	8	7	12	29	39	-10	31	W D D L L
11 Levadiakos	27	8	7	12	19	31	-12	31	D D L L L
12 AEK Athens	27	8	6	13	21	30	-9	30	D W L L L
13 Veria	27	7	9	11	23	30	-7	30	W L D W W
14 Panthrakikos	27	7	6	14	22	31	-9	27	D L L L L
15 Aris	27	5	11	11	26	39	-13	26	D L W L L
16 Kerkyra	27	4	8	15	14	36	-22	20	L L L W L

TURKEY

Süper Lig




	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Galatasaray	27	15	8	4	51	29	+22	53	W W L D W
2 Fenerbahçe	27	14	7	6	47	30	+17	49	W W W L W
3 Beşiktaş	27	12	10	5	54	39	+15	46	W D W W W
4 Kasımpaşa	27	12	7	8	40	28	+12	43	W W D W L
5 Bursaspor	27	10	10	7	40	36	+4	40	L W L W L
6 Gençlerbirliği	27	9	11	7	39	37	+2	38	D W W D L
7 Antalyaspor	27	11	4	12	40	41	-1	37	L L L W L
8 Eskişehirspor	27	8	12	7	40	33	+7	36	L D D D D
9 Kayserispor	27	10	6	11	35	39	-4	36	L D W W W
10 Sivasspor	27	10	5	12	31	36	-5	35	W L W L L
11 Gaziantepspor	27	9	8	10	32	42	-10	35	W W D L W
12 Trabzonspor	27	9	7	11	30	32	-2	34	W L D L W
13 Karabükspor	27	9	6	12	34	43	-9	33	W D L L L
14 İstanbul BB	27	8	8	11	33	34	-1	32	L W D D D
15 Elazığspor	27	7	11	9	24	38	-14	32	D D W W W
16 Orduspor	27	6	11	10	33	37	-4	29	L L L L W
17 Akhisar Beledi...	27	6	8	13	23	38	-15	26	L W D L W
18 Mersin İdmanyurdu	27	4	9	14	28	42	-14	21	L L D L L

HOLLAND Eredivisie



	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Ajax	28	17	9	2	66	28	+38	60	W W W W D
2 PSV	28	18	3	7	85	31	+54	57	D W L W L
3 Vitesse	28	17	6	5	57	32	+25	57	W W W W W
4 Feyenoord	28	17	5	6	53	35	+18	56	L W W W W
5 Twente	28	13	9	6	44	26	+18	48	D W L L L
6 Utrecht	28	14	6	8	42	32	+10	48	W L W L W
7 Heerenveen	28	10	8	10	43	48	-5	38	W W W W W
8 ADO Den Haag	28	8	12	8	42	52	-10	36	L L D W D
9 NEC	28	10	6	12	37	49	-12	36	L L L L W
10 Heracles	28	8	10	10	53	55	-2	34	L W W L L
11 Groningen	28	9	6	13	27	44	-17	33	W L D L W
12 NAC Breda	28	8	8	12	33	44	-11	32	D W D L W
13 RKC Waalwijk	28	7	8	13	31	36	-5	29	W L L W L
14 AZ	28	7	8	13	40	48	-8	29	W L D L L
15 PEC Zwolle	28	7	8	13	31	45	-14	29	L W L W L
16 Roda JC	28	5	11	12	40	56	-16	26	D L L W L
17 VVV	28	5	7	16	29	56	-27	22	L L L L W
18 Willem II	28	3	8	17	25	61	-36	17	L L W L L

LEAGUE ONE														
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first					
1 Doncaster Rovers	41	22	9	10	58	40	+18	75	W	L	W	D	W	
2 AFC Bournemouth	42	21	10	11	67	51	+16	73	W	W	W	W	W	

Premier Plate Winners!

To the victors the spoils! Wanderers are on their way to clinching the Premiers Plate with a 3-0 win over Newcastle Jets.



Les Shorrock's
Action Packed
Picture Page
Salutes WSW



Western Sydney fans have come out in force to support their new club and heroes this debut season.



Full circle: Mark Bridge fittingly opened the scoring for the Wanderers.

A night and season to remember

It has been an inaugural season for a club like none other in the relatively short history of the A-League. Surely it's one that will not be matched for many decades to come. The Western Sydney Wanderers (WSW) is truly a club for the people, and of the community.

Being part of the occasion last (good) Friday at the Hunter Stadium was indeed a rare privilege and experience of a lifetime.

What must have been the biggest pregame outdoor BBQ ever held by a football supporters group was followed by the ritual march to the stadium involving many thousands of singing and colourful fans.

Guided along the canals and through the parklands to fill so many bays that by kick off the atmosphere was almost as intimidating for our opponents as a packed home Parramatta Stadium. Once one up, then two up soon into the first half, I allowed myself to relax, enjoy and celebrate in consistent song with my 9-10,000 fellow supporters. Full-time and the outpouring of joy amongst fans, players, coaching staff and club officials alike culminated in the ritual exchange between players and fans:

"Who do we sing for? We sing for Wanderers...etc"

Then filing out under the acoustically brilliant spaces beneath the main eastern stand, the waves of chants echoed along:

"We're from the streets of Western Sydney. Home of the mighty RBB, RBB. We will follow you forever. Always will we be by your side. Come on come on Wanderers. Come on come on Wanderers. Come on come on come on come on Wanderers..."

This achievement was tempered on Sunday by sad news of the tragic sudden death of WSW Media Manager, Rod Allen. He was a very decent man, and will be much missed by the club and supporters. Vale Rod, from your football family.

The WSW epitomises the multi-cultural football heartland of Australia, with community and club on the same pages from day one in terms of shared philosophy, vision, passion, commitment,

creativity and focus.

I'm proud to be associated with the Wanderers and have enjoyed immensely what its supporters led and inspired by the Red and Black Bloc (RBB) have contributed in helping to make season one such a success on and off the park.

Upon reflection, the Wanderer's away form (the best ever in A-League history) has clearly demonstrated the strength of focus and consistent implementation of coach Poppa's playing structure, systems and style. Every player fully understands and applies their role to a high standard. I've enjoyed and marvelled at this first hand at many away games including exciting trips to Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Gosford and finally Newcastle.

So often has the travelling RBB out sung their rival home supporters, and not just based upon numerical superiority. It's important that the RBB not be compromised by media (especially mainstream) curiosity to reveal behind the scenes or on the terraces stories, and especially from those with a track record of an underlying "anti-soccer" agenda. This mistrust is well founded, and WSW members and supporters must continue to feel comfortable to express themselves without being judged or stereotyped.

And so on to the semi-final on 12 April, and the opportunity to move another step closer to finishing the season with a place in the Grand Final and securing that "other" title. The mark of the best team is the Premiers Plate. One day when we have an FA Cup style knock out competition, then may be Australian football will have evolved enough to have a league title decided like in just about every other mature football nation.

Regardless, the reward of ACL football beckons next year and I'll look forward to be part of the travelling support to fascinating destinations in Japan, China and Korea.

By Pablo Bateson



The Wanderers and their fans are engaged in the moment of deservedly making Australian football history.